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MELBA'S GIFT BOOK

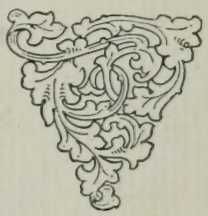
MELBA

Florence Rodway

Frontispiece

Nellie Melba

The Entire Profits from the Sale of this Book will be devoted by Madam Melba to the Belgian Relief Fund.



MELBA'S GIFT BOOK

OF

AUSTRALIAN ART AND LITERATURE

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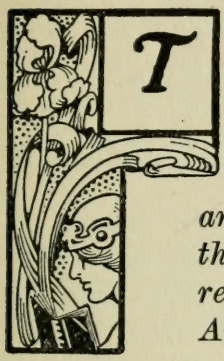

THERE is a personal reason for the appearance of this book. I was born in Australia, and I glory in the land of my birth. But as an artist I was born in Belgium. I made my debut there; my first appearance in opera was at Brussels, and I can still hear the cheers of my first audience, the kindly, warm-hearted Belgians whose generous recognition of the unknown artist from distant Australia gave me hope and courage to persevere.

For me, personally, the remembrance of that night makes a link, that can never be broken, between my native homeland and the country where my life as an artist had its beginning. To the Belgians, who welcomed me long ago, Australia was a land of fable; but they opened their hearts and took me in. Could an artist—could a woman—ever forget such an experience?

All hearts are with the Belgians for their heroism, and for their sufferings. My heart is with them, not only for what they have done and for what they have endured, but because I lived among them in their brighter, happier days, and because I learned to love them.

How charming the people of Belgium were! Lovers of freedom, lovers of all the arts, lovers of beauty, lovers of flowers, lovers of children. That is how I recall them. Honourable, public-spirited, industrious, competent, inheriting the passion for independence that their forefathers showed in the long struggle against all who tried to crush them.

Can we believe that the race that withstood Alva, Louis Quatorze, and Napoleon will succumb to a greater tyrant than any of them—but an infinitely smaller man? No, a nation made up of such people cannot be blotted out.

I love every stone in Belgium; but now those stones are trodden by invaders. And such invaders! One lies awake at night thinking of what they have done, and wondering how one can help the victims who still survive. What does the heart require of any nation that claims its sympathy? That the men should be brave and tender, the women loving and true, and the children frank and gay. That is what the Belgians were as I remember them, and that is what they will be still, when all this dark cloud of misery has passed away.

The Belgians are a finely artistic people. In music, in painting, in sculpture, in architecture, in poetry, they have produced masterpieces. The nation has a soul that loves what is beautiful and what is true. That is why they love liberty.

To live nobly, and to die splendidly for liberty—surely that is the greatest of all the arts. In that supreme art they have shown themselves pre-eminent. We who are the spectators in the auditorium can at least give them praise and thanks from the depths of our souls.

And that is the purpose of this Australian book.

Nellie Melba

EDITOR: FRANKLIN PETERSON

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The Design for the Cover by Sydney Ure Smith.

Flowers of the Field.

By JOHN SANDES.

["The coming of the Spring in France. . . ."—*Daily Paper.*]

FLOWERS of the field, how your fragrance appealing,
Is lavished for largesse and poured without stint!
Afar, o'er the sundering ocean, 'tis stealing;
And just through a word in a column of print.
Oh for sandals of swiftness, or carpet of story,
Or, fleeter than all, fancy's far-soaring wing,
To pass to those scenes that are gilded with glory
When dark days of Winter are banished by Spring.

* * * * * *

I see a green plain . . . . a few ruined white houses . . . .
A cottage unroofed, and a shell-riddled barn . . . .
A river that flows where placid herd browses. . . . .
And is it the Wind that just whispers—"The Marne!"
The blue sky of France, in those waters for omen
Reflected, prefigures the tranquil new day.
No trace is there left of the trampling of foemen,
For Springtide has wiped all the war-stains away.

From the front in the North comes the roll of the thunder,
Where gun answers gun o'er the barrier-flood,
And the soul and the body are stricken asunder;
But here, on this river, is peace—bought with blood.
Those long shallow trenches? O'er terrors triumphant
Men digged them and died in them under the stars.
Their comrades leaped forward, victorious, exultant—
And the earth is o'er-greened by the Healer of scars.

And there on the slopes, where the prospect is spacious,
From sunshine and dew and the light showers shed
Spring weaves a soft coverlet, seemly and gracious,
And tenderly folds it o'er each hero's bed.
And lest, in the turmoil that knows no cessation,
E'en Love should be helpless to guide to the grave,
And the comrade should come not with last ministration,
God lays his own flowers on the tombs of the brave.

O flowers of the field, I can see you at morning,
So dewy and dear at the earth-mother's breast;
The wild-rose, the snowdrop, the bluebell, adorning
The slopes where the children of Liberty rest.
To the story of those who out yonder are sleeping
Each springtime returning new witness shall yield,
By the red, white, and blue of those petals out-peeping;
For courage, peace, hope, are the flowers of the Field.

And hark to the skylark, at heaven's gate singing,
As once in the April of long, long ago.
While Earth has her springtimes that song shall come ringing—
A paean of praise for the heroes below.
And we, far away, listen wide-eyed and breathless;
No bird carols yonder, in France o'er the sea.

* * * * * *

The Spirit of Freedom, in song that is deathless,
Is welcoming homeward the souls of the free.

John Sanders.

Sydney.

LIBERTY: "Fool, it is through crimes such as yours that strength is given me to defeat you in the end."

Norman Lindsay

A Snuff-Box for Bismarck.

By ETHEL S. TURNER (Mrs. H. R. Curlewis).

"Which leaves us," concluded the honorary auctioneer, in a depressed tone, "with a deficit of eleven and fourpence."

"Eh? Eh?" said the old man, who leaned forward, one hand to an ear, on one of the seats at the back of the hall.

"H'sh, Grandpa, people are looking at you," admonished the small girl who sat beside him, but her face also wore a very troubled look. Indeed, a wave of depression had washed over the entire room.

Here was the second and concluding day of a fete in aid of the Belgian funds, and it was in imminent danger of absolute failure.

The weather was brilliant; there were matinees and football matches and the races—scores, indeed, of other attractions. The suburb warmly wished the fete success but left it for once to the other man, or to be more exact, the other woman, to attend it in person.

The result was that at six in the afternoon matters stood as the auctioneer so sadly put it: when the hire of the hall, and the carpenters for erecting the stalls had been paid, and lighting fees had been met, and the cost of the ice-cream, not only would there be no cheque to send to the hard-pushed Belgians, but there would be a deficit of eleven and fourpence. Also there would be the bitterness of failure for the stall-holders who had worked so hard.

A deficit meant ineffaceable failure, positive disgrace for the stall-holders and promoters. They stood or sat about the hall looking hurt, bewildered, even angry: they were finding it hard to

realise what was happening. The stalls, the fruit of incessant toil for weeks, were excellently furnished; the programme of events was even better than it had been for the fete of a fortnight ago, when the promoters had netted a hundred pounds for the fund; the articles collected for the auction were as valuable. Yet the fact remained that they were faced by abject failure where the others had succeeded. It was the first time that the suburb had been unanimous in assuming that the other man (or woman) would go.

The auctioneer came down from the stage, the sparse audience dispersed, the workers dispiritedly fortified themselves for the few remaining hours with cups of doubtful tea and the sandwiches and scones for which there had been no demand in the refreshment booth.

The grandfather and the small girl started homeward hand in hand. The small girl's mother, one of the disheartened stall-holders, remained behind to guard her unhonored fancy-work and be ready for business if such an unexpected person as a buyer should happen along.

"A deficit," muttered the old man, incredulously. He knew how hard his daughter-in-law had worked for the cause. But the small girl thought that he, too, was puzzled by the unusual word.

"Yes," she said, "I don't know what it means either, but I'm sure it is something not very nice. I think it must be *another* cushion."

Her grandfather explained the term with the punctilious care that his great age—he was eighty—gave him time for.

Cathie walked the length of an entire street while she digested the meaning of this. And then her fast-moving little brain found a solution for the new problem.

"Tell you what, Grandpa," she said. "I know what's the matter. People are just tired of buying cushions. I know *I* am. What's the use of them? 'Cept for cats to sit on. Oh-h-h!"

The little brain had leapt ahead at lightning speed now.

"Eh?" said the old man. "Eh?"

But the child walked by his side in pregnant silence. Never

a word all the way up the long road, down the short side-street, and as far as the gate. She even stooped and extracted the front-door key from under the mat,—that hiding-place known to all day-burglars but still time-honoured—and spoke no word. But as they stepped into the narrow hall and something soft and eager rubbed against their legs she made her announcement.

"Grandpa," she said firmly, "when we go back to-night I'm going to take my kitty to be sold. Yes, so I am."

Of course he tried to dissuade her. At eighty, one remembers again quite clearly the capacity of eight for the passion of pain. But she was adamant. The Mayor, who had opened the fete, had pictured the woes of the land of deathless courage in a flood of words that had washed straight to the heart of this child of eight. There was nothing in the world that she felt she would not give or do for Belgium. But, unhappily, there seemed nothing within the power of eight-years-old to either give or do.

Until her little cat met her.

People would not buy cushions any longer: well, she did not blame them. Cushions were stupid, stuffy things—especially bazaar cushions, decorated to such an extent that it was a heinous offence to cast one on the floor or carry it out on the grass or dress it up as a baby.

But a little cat with long smoky blue fur, a little cat, half Persian, even if half "just cat," a little cat with gentle, green eyes, —why the rush to acquire it would be so great there would be bread for starving Belgium for days!

Nothing would move her: she even persisted that the kitten would be glad to be sold if it knew about Belgium.

So the old man desisted in his attempt to dissuade her; he even exulted over the sacrifice, in his heart. She was not a soldier's granddaughter for nothing.

And then there came a sudden light into his faded blue eyes; he would not be eclipsed in gallantry now any more than he had ever permitted himself to be, when forty-three years ago he was

fighting at Sedan. He, too, would sell the thing he cared for most; he would sell the very gun with which he had fought.

He had not always been conscious that it was the thing he cared for most; there had been years in his wandering life when his thoughts had hardly gone to it for a moment. But he had never parted with it: even when he flung off to Australia to earn the livelihood that, after the war, it seemed impossible to earn in France, it was an integral part of his luggage.

In the peace that lapped him round, late in life, in the little home of his son and daughter-in-law, it became again the object that stood for the backbone of his life. It was his link with the past; it was even, he considered, a sort of passport to the great Peace.

When he grew fretful with himself because his poor old hands shook and his knees trembled at exertion, he used to look at the gun where it stood in a corner of his bedroom, and remind himself that at all events he had once been a man.

He lifted the beloved "flingot" to him, this particular afternoon, as if it were a thing alive.

"Ought to fetch a fine penny, eh?" he said to the child.

But Cathie was a very woman; self-sacrifice was all very well for her sex, but one could not see a man denude himself like this without protest. Also at eight, one could quite realise the capacity of eighty for the passion of pain.

"Oh, no, Grandpa,—not your gun,—not your dear old gun. Anything else you like—how'd it be to give them your watch? —but not your Franco-Prussian gun." She tried to take it from his hands by force.

"You're giving your kitten, little one," he said.

"Oh, but just *think* of your gun," said the child. "R'mber that day you lay behind the grass bank with daisies on it, and the enemy kept on shooting and shooting at you, and you kept sitting up and shooting with it for five minutes and then tumbling down sideways and going to sleep for five minutes, you were so tired after two days of it, and just as you tumbled down once and started

(In the Collection of Professor W. Baldwin Spencer)

The Bathers

to snore, a bullet hit where your head would have been if you hadn't been so sleepy."

The old man fondled his old "tabatiere."

"It got back on them for it," he said. "The other fellows behind our bit of bank had used up all their ammunition, but my bouts of going to sleep had saved me quite a lot. When the Germans behind the haystack found we were slacking off, they made a rush to come at us, but I fired so thick and fast all of a sudden that they thought we'd got fresh supplies and sneaked back again behind their hay."

"Well, how could you sell it after that!" said the child. But the old man shouldered it determinedly.

"Belgium shall have it," he said. "Come on, ma p'tite. How much do you think it will fetch?"

"A thousand pounds?" hazarded the child,—"ten thousand pounds?—a million? Oh, Grandpa, p'raps they'll give a million for it."

And the old man was hardly a whit behind her in his fond notion of the value of the thing.

"I shouldn't be surprised if it fetched a clear fifty," he said.

At nine o'clock the attendance in the hall was still sparse, and the stalls were still overflowing with ornamental articles, but the kitten had been sold and re-sold until the sum of eight pounds was reached.

The auctioneer, who had an eye for effect, had taken Cathie up on the platform with him and she stood beside him, the little cat on her shoulder and an eager eye on the audience.

And the little cat made itself so entirely at home, and washed itself with such extreme innocence while its fate was being decided, that it simply charmed bids out of the mouths of the people.

Finally it fell to a soft-eyed girl who had just come in from a motor-car to "show up" in place of her wealthy and weary-in-well-doing parents. She had brought two or three sovereigns

to spend as in duty bound, and had just been casting about languidly for the least vexatious things to spend it on, when the auction of the kitten began.

Eight pounds was a good deal, however, even for a wealthy girl, to give for a kitten that, however innocent of eye and blue of fur, was still undoubtedly half "plain cat."

The excitement of the auction over, and the kitten in her arms showing unmistakable symptoms of a disposition to scratch, the girl felt sobered and anxious to get home and see whether she could coax the extra five pounds out of her father instead of taking it out of her own allowance.

But she paused a moment to watch the succeeding auction.

The auctioneer again thought it an effective move to produce the owner of the article to be sold, as well as the article, and the white-haired old man crossed the platform with proud eyes and a shaky step rendered still more shaky by the weight of the weapon.

The auctioneer explained matters carefully: this was a gun he was about to sell, a real "chassepot" that had been at the battle of Sedan and had sent many a German to a warmer climate than that of Germany. This was a gun generously presented to them by the man who had stood behind it on that unforgotten day, and that would be a proud person into whose possession it passed. Who would start the bidding for it?

"T-t-t-en shillings," said a shabby schoolboy, stuttering between his eagerness to possess such a treasure and his shame at the smallness of his bid.

The old man on the platform looked down at him with a sort of royal benevolence. He had been a poor schoolboy himself.

The incident took his thoughts to certain French schoolboys who had seen and reverently fingered his old weapon and dreamed of "La Revanche," and who were now in the trenches of Ypres trying, with rifles of a later pattern, to obtain it.

"A pound," said the chief barber of the suburb. It was more than he gave usually for the wall ornaments of his saloon, but this was war-time and the tastes of customers must be met, even pandered to.

The old man on the platform looked down at this bidder too, but there was no benevolence in his gaze: he had never been a barber.

"Twenty-two and six," said the schoolboy, his face white at the thought of the impossibility of paying such a sum and yet forcibly impelled to the offer.

"Twenty-five shillings," said the barber.

"Thirty," shouted the boy.

The barber smiled, shook his head, gave up.

No other voice raised itself.

What use had an audience such as was gathered there for a battered, rusty weapon of war? Weapons of war, new and effective, were wearifully common objects in households now-a-days. And what was Sedan, anyway? If it had been a ham offered, now, or a large pumpkin, or a doll, or a cushion, or another kitten with an engaging expression! But a gun,—however real the auctioneer might insist it was! Who wanted it? Were not all guns real guns now?

The auctioneer stuck to his task for a hard five minutes, trying to get an advance on that thirty shillings, but no one moved. Numberless articles awaited his attention—he could waste no more time.

"Thirty shillings," he cried,—"this gun that was at Sedan,—it's a shame, a crying shame—thirty shillings? No one make it two pounds? Going. Gone. It's yours, my boy."

He seized a pink and green cushion and began work again.

The old man tottered off the platform with bewildered eyes, yielding his gun to the eager boy who met him at the steps.

"I say!" stuttered the lad, fondling it, "I say!" His eyes were moist: he might have been a mother with her first child in her arms.

The old man sat heavily down on the nearest bench.

But now the girl, Joan Mansfield, who had bought the kitten, steered a course through the hall for the ice-cream marquee to which she had sent her chauffeur while he waited for her.

She refused firmly on the way to be drawn into raffles or indeed to spend one other penny; that eight pounds weighed heavily upon her mind even though the kitten, after a searching examination of her soul, had now accepted her and snuggled down peacefully in her arms.

But just outside the ice-cream tent she heard a sob, a very bitter sob, and looking down in the half-light found the small owner of the cat fairly drowned in tears.

It was a sweet, unspoiled young heart that beat underneath the ultra-fashionable motor-coat: it at once stifled the feeling that was growing in it for the little blue cat.

"Here you are, darling," she murmured, stooping over the poor atom, "here's you kitty back. I don't want it."

Then she found that the poor atom was something more than an eight-year-old who had made a sacrifice that was too much for its years. The kitten was thrust back at her, and with indignation.

"I'm not crying for her!" said the child, "I'm glad. Eight pounds is a lovely lot. I wouldn't have her back for anything."

"Then why are you crying?" asked the young lady, relieved that she might have something, after all, to take home to account for her transient insanity.

"Oh-h-h," said the child and dissolved again into an amorphous atom,—"thirty shillings. Poor Grandpa! Oh-h-h! Grandpa's gun!"

Gathered in the same circle that held the cat, all the history of the ancient firearm came out.

* * * * * *

BUSH SOLITUDE

Victor Cobb.

They were playing cards for high stakes in the smoking-room of the huge expensive flats down on the water's edge of the suburb.

Mr. Mansfield was amongst them, who had transferred to his daughter the duty of appearing at the Fete for the Belgians, while he entertained more pleasantly his friends from the city, wealthy merchants like himself, at cards.

Into this sacred room, into this atmosphere of smoke and peacefulness, burst the eager-eyed, spoiled girl with her story of the gun from Sedan.

They must put down their cards this minute; they must get into their motor cars that were waiting outside and come and bid against each other with all their might and main for that gun. They must stop at the doors of two or three more expensive flats in the near vicinity and storm smoking-rooms and drag forth more moneyed men to the fray.

It may have been the eloquently-presented notion of the old man sitting stunned by his unsuccessful sacrifice. Or it may just have been because the girl's eyes were sweetly fringed and the dimple in her chin a distracting one.

At all events they came, to a man.

But in the town hall once more the girl remembered that she still had work to do. She still had to possess herself of the gun which was the undoubted belonging now of a shabby schoolboy.

She had made sure that he would not have left the fete.

When you have sweetly-fringed eyes and a dimple that your girl friends openly envy, you know that you have only to say "wait" and he waits, even if he be only a schoolboy quite unknown to you and undoubtedly shabby.

He was waiting near the ice-cream booth, still hugging the gun.

"Oh," she said, laying her hands on it, "you will help us, won't you? You'll let us have it to sell again."

To sell again! His gun from Sedan! He looked at her in absolute horror. He held the firearm in a deathless grip.

"You understand, don't you?" she continued. "We've got plenty of buyers now. It went too cheap before."

Too cheap! And he had impoverished himself of the next three quarters' pocket-money at least—had borrowed from a relative who would exact the uttermost farthing.

"M-m-my gun," he stuttered. "I bought it. Thirty shillings."

"Oh, yes," she said gently, "of course you did, and it was very generous of you to bid when hardly anyone else would. But now we want you to be still more generous and give it back to us —for the sake of that poor old man—and Belgium."

The boy swallowed hard, looked at her piteously one half moment, then thrust it blindly into her arms.

"It's just frightfully sporting of you," she murmured, for she had suddenly seen the pain in his eyes. "Come on back in the hall and let's see what it fetches. And, of course, that thirty shillings is my affair."

"No," he said, "mine."

His heart that had been so suddenly emptied just as suddenly filled. It was his gift to Belgium now, whatever sum was realised. The debt he had hung round his neck would be a thing to rejoice his heart during the coming three quarters.

They had to shake the old man to make him realise the situation: he seemed sunk in a sort of dull stupor, sitting at the back of his daughter-in-law's stall, with Cathie silently holding his hand.

Soon they had him tottering on the stage again with the poor old gun on his shoulder, but there was no confidence this time in his faded eyes.

The bidding started at twenty pounds; leapt to thirty, to fifty, to seventy, and then by five pounds at a time to a hundred.

When it was knocked down at that sum the bidders cheered the owner. When he came down from the stage they crowded round him, hitting him gently on the back, making him tell them of

Sedan again, and how it felt to shoot and be shot at. He even sang for them in his quavering voice bits of the Tipperaries of his day. They wildly encored his "snuff box" ditty, with its refrain—

"This snuffbox here of mine
Holds right good rapparee.
For thy snub-nose, Bismarck,
This first-class snuff shall be."

They had to take him home in one of the cars afterwards: one can get drunk with joy at eighty as easily as with wine at eighteen.

Ethel Turner

Sydney.

Socks.

By MARION BRAY.

OH, soldier brave, I thought of you,
As to and fro my needles flew,
As stitch by stitch my knitting grew;
Of you and all who bear the brunt
Of modern warfare's dread affront.

"God bless my brothers at the Front.
In pride of race no fear have I
That heart should fail or courage fly;
I know that thousands greatly die
That other thousands nobly live.

Thy peace, oh Lord, Thy mercy give
To those who fall, to those who strive
That we in safety may abide."
God keep thee, friend, whate'er betide
For whom this little task I plied.

Marion Bray

Rosanna, Vic.

Louvain! Ah, Louvain!

By BERNARD O'DOWD.

AS on the legendary brow of Cain
Mocking the rasp of all-forgiving Time,
How long on German foreheads must remain
Those livid letters of their fathers' crime,
"Louvain"? (Ah, Louvain!)

Lessing, of Gothic power and clear Greek brain,
Who taught my Christian soul to love the Jew,
Interpreter sublime of marble Pain,
Was yours the God that sent the serpents to
Louvain? (Ah, Louvain!)

Kant and Copernicus, whose levers twain
Sped worlds inert on living rounds to fare,
Drove ye the storm that quenched with bloody rain
Learning that loved, so long before ye were,
Louvain? (Ah, Louvain!)

Did Durer's glorious eye foresee too plain,
In valley wan, the sunlit hills below,
Knight of the Grail on quest of sombre gain,
Through mist of blood, with Death and Devil go?
(Louvain! Ah, Louvain!)

Fouque, within whose star-lit woodland fane
My youth wooed Austral Undines of its own,
What vampire troll with wet red lips doth drain,
What eft hath stunned with coward thunderstone
Louvain? (Ah, Louvain!)

Supreme Beethoven! Schubert's lyric pain!
And he who drew the Valkyr from the sky!
Ours too the horror when the Belgian slain
Inweave your chords for ever with the sigh,
"Louvain!" (Ah, Louvain!)

Goethe, who dowered Europe with the grain
The golden fields of England's Shakespeare bore,
Was this the Light your dying dream saw plain—
A flaming Belgium and the hell-bomb o'er
Louvain? (Ah, Louvain!)

Had Mephistopheles a darker brain?
Did Auerbach cellar gorge obscener wines
Than they whose tactic coldly planned the stain
Of womanhood 'mid Naboth's trodden vines?
(Louvain! Ah, Louvain!)

Though Eden closing shadowed Life, again
The Tree of Knowledge sprang in Germany!
But ah! Must knowledge always mother pain?
The fruit become a poison on that Tree?
(Louvain! Ah, Louvain!)

Fore-motherhood of ravaged Allemagne,
The "curse of God" with Etzel passed away!
But in your glebe he sowed a deadlier bane
To flower malignant in your crops to-day!
(Louvain! Ah, Louvain!)

Australian Germans, rich in heart and brain,
Who sought the Light with us where'er it shone,
Does blood like theirs infect your smallest vein—
The fiends who turned the sluice of hell upon
Louvain? (Ah, Louvain!)

All ye who harried foul oppression's reign
With deed inspired and lightning word so long!
Hauptmann to-day or peer of Charlemagne!
Schiller, who wed revolt to deathless song!
Uhland and Korner, to whose trumpets twain
Fell down the tyrant walls of Jericho!
Eckart and Behmen of the mystic fane,
Whose Light released us from a darker foe!
Schelling, who 'mid the chaos uttered plain
The word "Democracy!" and there was Light!
Heine, whose laugh corroded every chain!
Are those the helots ye had freed, who blight
Louvain? (Ah, Louvain!)

Thwarters of tyranny from Rome to Spain!
What nightmare rides your long, long sleep, ye great?
Ye great and good? O wrought ye then in vain,
That shame like this should pall your country's fate?
(Louvain! Ah, Louvain!)

* * * * * *

The Hundredth Psalm shall never throb again
Without the angel of each mighty bar
Moaning in poignant minor this refrain—
(Toward what dim Throne 'yond all the Gods that are?)
"Louvain! Ah, Louvain!"

Bernard O'Dowd.

Melbourne.

A Toast.

By NINA MURDOCH.

Charge your glasses and drink to the dead,
Our dead whatever their birthplace be,
Who have fought and suffered that such as we
Might live our little lives over sea.
Pledge a toast to the memory
Of the brave blood shed!

Lift your glasses and let the toast pass!
Yet haply if at the board there be
One who has taken his liberty
And paid no tithe of the nation's fee
In coin or labor or sons, 'tis he
Must lower his glass!

Nina Murdoch

Sydney.

THE MUSIC OF THE SWAMP

Harry Julius

Discord and Counterpoint.

A Story of the Australian Press.

By MONTAGUE GROVER.

IMAGINATION and the 'phone are probably the two most important attributes of twentieth-century press work. But at times both are apt to prove whited sepulchres—imagination when its propeller races, and the 'phone when it follows the ca' canny system of industrialism. On the occasions when both conspire to abuse the confidence placed in them, something resembling a journalistic cataclysm follows, and, if remedies can minister to the situations which result, such remedies have to be appropriately heroic. It was an heroic remedy which Baxter applied to the position created by the wreck of the *Leonora,* rehabilitating him in the eyes of the Powers as a safe and sound reporter, and bringing heartburning and anguish to the heart of James E. Gale, master mariner, of Portland, Oregon, U.S.A., who, for a few brief hours, had revelled in the ecstasy of prospective millionairedom on the strength of many dollars to be won in the courts of law from the "Times" Newspaper Company Limited of Sydney, New South Wales.

In the bad old days, before Dr. Bell and Mr. Thomas Alva Edison had made "the little man in the box" such an important feature of journalistic life, the city would have had its breakfast ignorant of the fact that there had been an exciting wreck at the Heads, with all the thrilling accompaniments of heroism, self-sacrifice and rescue. It would probably have been ignorant of the very existence of the American barque *Leonora.* It cer-

tainly would have known nothing of its gallant skipper. And even when the story was told in the evening papers, it would never have learned that that same gallant skipper had accomplished a deed of derring-do unprecedented in nautical lore, revealing courage of such stupendous calmness and deliberation as to make the gallantry of previous gallant skippers pale into insignificance.

It was the 'phone, which everybody in his time has cursed to the lowest depths of Erebus, which exalted James E. Gale, master mariner, to a niche of fame level with that of Nelson, Paul Jones, Farragut, Hobson, and other great ones possessed of reputations made on a liquid basis, such exaltation being valued by the legal advisers of James E. Gale at £3,000, failing payment of which they instructed the manager of the "Times" Newspaper Company Limited they would issue a writ without further notice. Incidentally, they demanded a full and ample apology inserted in a position as prominent as the original article—which, as Euclid would say, was absurd—not that Captain Gale bothered about the apology at all. If he got 14,000 dahlars, he told his legal advisers, he would be satisfied, and he guessed they would be some lawyers.

Although the 'phone was the originating factor of this unpleasant incident—the causa causans, as Captain Gale's legal advisers would have said—it is impossible to deny that the imagination of Billy Baxter, of the "Times" reporting staff, was altogether blameless. Even with the 'phone working in the shocking manner it was that night, it is tolerably certain that, had the end of the wire been held by Brown, who did the High Court, or McKenzie, who did the cattle sales, the public would have missed the sensation of the year, and the "Times" would have missed a threat of action, together with an increased circulation of some hundreds of readers who "went over" from the "Despatch," owing to the latter journal's having missed such a fine news item. Baxter's imagination must accept portion, at any rate, of the blame, but it is entitled to plead in extenuation that it made full amends for its excess of zeal.

The first intimation of the wreck came at about 11 p.m. The Heads rang up to report that a large vessel had gone ashore on the rocks half a mile from the entrance. Who she was, what had happened, they did not know. Four seconds after the news-editor had hung up the receiver, the news editor had sent Gates out for a taxi, had told two other men to throw away the copy they were writing, and get out to the Heads with Gates, and had set the switch ringing round every police station in the city for Baxter. Having done this, he sat down to map out his plan of campaign. It was late, very late; there was no chance of any of the men sent to the Heads getting back in time to write their copy. It was a 'phone job, or nothing. If the 'phones went sour, it meant being scooped, and being scooped badly. He knew that Gates would not rely solely on the departmental 'phone. He possessed sufficient powers of bluff and persuasion to get his men on to some private subscribers. Still, it was a dirty night, and 'phones have an annoying habit of working badly on dirty nights, when they are most required to work well. He allotted Baxter to one of the office 'phones; two other senior men to others. The three had to get their stories, as best they could, from the three men at the other end, and when they had told him the "strength" in twenty words apiece, he intended to distribute the work of writing up. This would prevent the duplication otherwise inevitable, and provide for the fullest report in the time available.

Meanwhile there was nothing to be done but sit by the 'phones and watch the clock—that is, nothing for the news editor and two reporters. Baxter was already preparing his main headlines and writing odd sentences on different slips of paper, sentences which could be fitted in afterwards where most appropriate. During the ensuing hour, the Heads rang up five times. Each ring gave a few additional particulars. The vessel was the *Leonora*—that fact itself was good enough for half a column built out of the Shipping Register, and the "Shipping Gazette." The lifeboat had been launched. This made another half column. The whole of the people living around the Heads had been aroused and,

deserting their houses, had made for the scene of the disaster. The musical critic who had just filed his copy of a concert, was seized, just as he was going home, to write an imaginative story of the scene. As he knew the district well, and had some imagination—although he was a musical critic—he turned out a fine picturesque three-quarters of a column. As each of these bits of information came along Baxter himself incorporated them in the general introduction he was preparing, avoiding repetition and introducing a feature here or an incident there as its probability struck him. Still, his heart sank, for with each successive ring the 'phone was growing less dependable. The last conversation from the Heads had consisted wholly of vowel sounds, many intelligible only by the context, all blurred and chopped and battered. At last, the bell sounded again.

"Gates speaking," he heard, but he heard it largely because that was the sentence in his mind, the sentence he had been waiting for for the last weary hour.

"Right," he replied, "Baxter here. Go ahead."

There was something like what Omar described as the rumble of the distant drums. Then a hen clucked, clucked, clucked interminably, as if triumphing over the very championship of an egg-laying competition.

Baxter used shocking language. He strained his ear and heard what sounded like "Oh, I saw." Then followed what is one of the most exasperating features of modern civilisation—a man yelling loudly at one end of a wire, a man listening intently at the other, and howling back, "Say it again."

It came again, "Oh, I saw." Baxter repeated the phrase in his mind, thinking over everything that might rhyme with it. Message-taking by bad 'phones is fine training for poets. At last, he hit it, "No lives lost," he repeated excitedly. He heard Gates say *Het* or *Bed* or *Rep* at the other end, and knew his conjecture was confirmed.

Piece by piece, fragments of the story were torn from the

Bush Giants

Hans Heysen

reluctant receiver. Some sentences were never translated—Baxter abandoned them as causing too much delay—some were translated into half a dozen different forms before their meaning could be guessed. Still, he was collecting the scraps of information which he would eventually lay before the public as a complete, close-fitting mosaic. Gates had told him how the captain ran for shelter when the storm broke at about 5 p.m.. How he was steering a good course when the conditions rose to something resembling a typhoon taking the vessel completely out of control and banging her on the rocks, just as he contrived to let the rocket go. Gates got through sufficient of the rescue work to form the foundation of a fine column and a half by one of the other men, and enabled Baxter to write some thrilling copy about the wait of the men on the doomed ship for the rescue party. Only one rocket, and that their last, had been fired. They did not know if it had been seen, and there they were, tight on a rock at the bottom of a 100-foot cliff, with big green seas sweeping them, expecting the barque to break up every minute. It was during this awful wait that the captain did his greatest work.

"What did he do?" cried Baxter.

"Blue good men ham sang now," Gates appeared to remark.

"What?"

"Blue good men ham sang now," repeated Gates. "Sang—sang now."

"Sang?" asked Baxter.

"Wet," replied Gates.

"Sang, got that. Sang to them?"

"Blue good—" began Gates.

"I know, I know," said Baxter. "But you said he sang to them. Do you know what it was he sang?"

"Blue good try if ship."

"What's that?"

"Ship, ship."

"I'll stick to the ship, boys," yelled Baxter, delightedly. "That right? He sang, 'I'll Stick to the Ship'?"

"Blue good—"

"Never mind repeating it, Gates. I've got it. It's getting late."

Baxter hung up the receiver delighted that, in spite of all the difficulties, they had been able to clean up the story. Very little was left for the evening press. And the best of it all was that they had secured the salient incident of the whole affair, the heroic captain standing on his deck in the face of almost certain death, and singing a song, popular and sentimental and appropriate, to inspire his men with further courage.

Baxter featured the song—two verses, he asserted, were sung, and he made reference to Captain Gale being possessed of a "robust baritone," which could be heard even above the howling of the wind. Mention was made of other notable mariners who had remained cool as cucumbers in the face of almost certain death, but none of these had sung songs or apparently thought of singing them. Only Captain Gale, the latest hero, had done this, and, in his story, Baxter left the impression that, by this one bright deed, Captain Gale was a much more heroic hero than all previous heroes.

As for Captain Gale himself, he and his merry men—none of whom seemed to share the enthusiasm of those of the Australian public present for their leader—were put up at the hotel nearest the Heads, where, after being given dry clothes and after consuming a quantity of alcoholic stimulant in front of a fire, they went to bed. Captain Gale awoke at about nine o'clock and had his breakfast. As he started to consume his ham and eggs, he propped the "Times" before him against the cruet stand. His eye caught the headlines and he dropped his knife and fork, making identically the same remark which Baxter had made the night previous when the 'phone went back on him. The waitress who had been performing some appropriate hero worship at his elbow, fled in alarm. The heroes she had been accustomed to encounter across the footlights never used language like that.

He cast the "Times" to the floor. He called to Gustafsen, his first mate, who was just filling his pipe at the other end of the room, and expressed his opinion of Australians generally, and Australian newspapers in particular. He called them what he usually reserved for members of his crew with Socialistic tendencies. Gustafsen, whose knowledge of English was confined to the technicalities of seafaring life, was loyally sympathetic, but didn't really know what had made the old man angry.

"I guess I'll see th' cahnsul, Gustafsen," said Captain Gale. "Makin' an American citizen look a dern fool. Say, Gustafsen, am I a sailorman who knows his game, or am I a galoot who'd get up an' sing ragtime when ma ship was on th' rocks?"

"No, you doesn't, Cap'n," replied Gustafsen.

"I guess not," roared Captain Gale. "Every man afloat'll think I'm bughouse. Who'd trust a ship with a son of a cook who tried ter charm th' storm with vocal music. Am I a Christian Science navigator or a ship's captain?"

"Dot's right," agreed the first mate.

Captain Gale ate his breakfast as a duty, not as a pleasure. It was as if he were chewing and swallowing sawdust. He hurried into the city, saw his agents, saw the American Consul, and saw a firm of solicitors, with the result stated.

As luck happened, Gates, who had been up all night, was in the "Times" office when the general manager entered the sub-editor's room with a letter in his hand. Gates, who was studying that day's paper, just waited long enough to grasp the purport of the letter, which was the demand for £3,000 in reparation of the cruel and infamous libel committed that day on an estimable American citizen. Then he slipped out of the door as speedily and as silently as he could, for the incident of the song, starred in the double column headlines, had astonished him even as it had astonished the outraged Captain himself. He had no desire to be cross-examined on the report until he had consulted Baxter.

Baxter he found in bed, still sleeping the sleep that comes to

the reporter who lays himself down with the consciousness of good work well done.

"What's the row, Jimmy?" demanded the yawning Baxter as he sat up in bed.

"Row! that's an understatement," explained Gates. "Row's nothing to what's happened. Writ for three thousand. Gale, captain of the *Leonora,* 's seen his lawyers already and shot in a writ over that report."

"Gale!" said Baxter. "Why, he's the hero of the hour. That story's been cabled through to London and New York."

"Makes it worse and worse," replied Gates. "It's the singing business he kicks at. What on earth made you fake on a thing like that?"

"Fake; it wasn't fake. Didn't you tell me he sang?"

"Not a word," replied Gates. "I kept trying to tell you he sang out to swim for it the moment the vessel went to pieces. I couldn't hear what you said, but I gathered you'd got it all right."

"Then he didn't sing at all?"

"Not a note. And you not only made him sing, but gave the name of the song, 'I'll Stick to the Ship, Boys,' and said he reeled off two verses and praised his rich baritone voice—rich was it, or powerful, or something like that. I know it reminded me of Grand Opera criticism. I wonder you didn't drag in the wood-winds. If I'd told you it was a timber boat, you would have for a certainty."

Baxter sat up with his knees in his hands. Then he laughed. "My word; it's got a humorous side, this tragedy. What a shock James E. Gale must have got when he found we'd put him among the vocal wonders. By the way, is he a baritone?"

"Don't know. Maybe a silvery tenor. Perhaps that's the libel."

Baxter did five minutes hard thinking. Then the imagination which had got him into trouble felt repentant and started working again.

(*National Gallery, Melbourne*)

CIRCE
(BERTRAM MACKENNAL, A.R.A.)

Photograph by J. KAUFFMANN.

He bounded from bed, and started dressing. "Where are the crew?" he demanded.

"Moved up to the Sailors' Home this morning," replied Gates.

"Right," replied Baxter. "How much money have you got on you?"

"Five or six pounds."

"I've got three. That'll do for a start. Now for the Sailors' Home."

In the reading room of that estimable institution, they found the crew—"seven men from all the world back to port again." Two were Americans, New Yorkers, the only Americans Baxter had met who used the dialect of the Bowery, saying *de* and *dat* for *the* and *that*. One was English, a Birmingham lad. Three were Finns and the last a Filipino with a name that seemed to have been taken from the programme of opera.

"You boys had a bad time last night," said Baxter sympathetically. "How is it for a drink?"

He desired privacy, and the reading room of a public institution, however estimable, is not the place for conversations of a fiduciary nature. They crossed the road to the bar parlor of an hotel and Baxter ordered the drinks while he studied the characters of the men. They talked of the wreck and of the hardness of a seafaring life. "Stiff" Molloy, one of the Bowery boys, expressed the opinion in the terse and picturesque diction of his native district that if any degenerate person, with the bar sinister on his escutcheon, ever caught him going to sea again, he would be willing to submit to shocking punishment. Baxter sized him up as the leader of the party. He called him outside, leaving Gates to entertain the rest.

"See here, Mr. Molloy," opened Baxter, dropping into the vernacular, "I figure it that among these boys what you say goes."

Molloy grinned: "Dat's right," he agreed.

"And you hold a sort of franchise over them?"

Molloy nodded.

"Then if you remember the old man standing on the deck singing, 'I'll Stick to the Ship, Boys,' to buck up your courage, they'll remember it too."

The seaman did not reply. He looked at Baxter hard and meaningly.

"I suppose you're from Missouri, Mr. Molloy. I know what that means."

"Dat's de goods," replied Molloy. "What's de rake-off?"

"Well, it's this way," explained Baxter. "Some people have bad memories, and in the excitement and horror of an experience like you had last night, it's no wonder anybody forgetting. Now your captain's clean forgotten about singing you that song. It was a most game thing of him to do, but he's too modest; he's forgotten it. The only thing to make him remember properly is a statutory declaration, you know what that is—an affidavit—from all you fellows that he *did* sing it. I suppose if you were to get, say, £10 for yourself, and £1 for each of those other boys, they'd remember enough to swear to."

Molloy's eye brightened. "Yous cough up de roll, an' I'll bet dey do," he declared.

Baxter pulled the money out of his pocket, counted it out and then paused.

"When I get the declarations—" he observed. "I'm from Missouri, too."

He called Gates out of the room, sent Molloy in, and in five minutes the Bowery boy appeared at the door again. "Where's de judge?" he inquired.

"Do the boys remember?" asked Baxter.

"Sure," replied Molloy, turning to his companions, "don't yous? Yous know how de old man got up when he thought she was smashin' and sung, 'I'll Stick to de Ship, Boys,' an' how it was just de dope we wanted when we was all in?"

"Sure," replied the other American; the Englishman winked;

the Finns smiled, and Ernani Ramon de Montabello of Manila grinned, showing his whole set of teeth.

The rest was easy. Baxter wrote out the declarations and at the office of Tom Gloucester, J.P., an old and trusted friend, seven men from all the world solemnly kissed the Bible and swore on their immortal souls that James E. Gale, master mariner, had inspired them to further battle with the elements by his spirited rendition of the stirring ballad, "I'll Stick to the Ship, Boys," whereby in their joint and several opinions their lives were spared.

Later in the day, when Baxter reached the "Times" office, he attended the room of the general manager in response to a brief note in the rack. The general manager, with a very serious face, handed Baxter the letter from the firm of solicitors. Baxter's smile didn't shift.

"I thought something of the sort might occur. Captain Gale passed through a terrible time," he said blandly. "So I just got a little substantial evidence from the only people competent to express an opinion. Here"—he cast a number of official-looking papers on the table—"are the statutory declarations of the members of the crew, bearing out our report in every detail."

The general manager glanced at the papers and heaved a sigh of relief. "I don't think we'll hear any more of this, Mr. Baxter," he said. "But I'd be a little—a little—well, sceptical about the telephones in future, if I were you."

Baxter strode out of the office with his eye bright and his gait springy. But when he turned into the corridor, he twisted up his mouth.

"Sixteen quid!" he mused. "Sixteen beautiful golden jim. Well—it can't be helped; it was the only way."

Montague Grover

Sydney.

A Seaside Sunset.

By C. B. COUTTS.

DEVOUTLY, comes the King of Day
to vespers, ere repose,
In gorgeous, royal crimson gowned;
his court, in flaming rose;
Encircling sombre priestly garb,
rich golden girdles gleam;
Attendant little acolytes
in topaz vestments dream.

Soft, chant adoring choristers
in dreamy, tender notes,
A chant whose strain Elysian,
like incense, upward floats.
A hush succeeds—a holy hush—
a mystic silence rare.
Sonorously, the mighty deep
sounds forth the closing prayer.

The rite is o'er! All nature sleeps
save Wind's soft ritornello,—
Her loving finger-touches wake
symphonies sweet and mellow.
At length, e'en Wind herself doth dream,
lulled by her music light.
And dew's soft benison doth fall
as tenderest goodnight.

C. B. Coutts

Maryborough, Vic.

Days and Distances in the Never Never.

By MRS. AENEAS GUNN.

THE homestead was in the throes of preparations for a three weeks' complexity of musterings, and cattle-holdings, and cattle drovings, and appointments east, west and north: preparations for a systematic getting together of a goodly mob of bullocks for, even then waiting, drovers. And a mustering to spread-out south and east, and work round north and west to a drawing-together on north-western borders of lesser culled mobs into one combined mob for delivery; and necessitating, perhaps, more than usual bustle among pack-bags, and stores, and pack-teams, and busiest black-boys, and all else in and about the homestead by way of those preparations.

Necessitating also,—in the making of those appointments,—much ticking-off of days and distances on fingers for the appointing of "Saturday next" here, and "Thursday week" there, on to a culminating "next Friday fortnight" and its "Saturday following," for the checking and passing-on, and gathering together of those lesser culled mobs: but, incidentally to the mystification of Bett-Bett's ever-investigating, queer, little piccaninny mind:—

"What name, missus, white-fellow all day savey, Monday Tuesday, Monday Tuesday?" she came to the more leisured house verandah to ask; peering out into sparkling sunlight and sunny blue skies for a sign: with last touches then to preparations to find her carefully testing the unanimity of her "white-fellow" world by enquiring the day's identity from each individual member of kitchen, and house, and men's quarters, out even to a chance traveller's camp. And, "just as well to be unanimous in these things!" appreciated those arrangements; for even "next Friday fortnight" to prove the exceeding need for unanimity in such things, where cattle-runs think little of a million or so of acres.

Friday fortnight,—appointed that ticking-off—a certain "Gordon's camp" of our Roper River "country"; and the Head Stockman's gathered-up mob, thirty miles to our north beside sweet sure waters. And for that "Saturday following," the "Yellow Hole," fifteen miles to the west again; and its holding yards, and that gathering-up of all for delivery "before the Sunday." With the Maluka to make whichever camp best suiting the chance of the moment and general station business. And all going well with "Saturday next," and "Thursday week," and all comings, and goings, and musterings, "Friday fortnight" dawned optimistic to a degree even as the Maluka and I,—to be precise, the Boss and the Missus,—rode out by the north slip-rails, followed by an amiably-sauntering old packhorse; with faithful canine, fox-terrier "Brown," trotting blithely on ahead as his own matter-of-course.

"No need for a black-boy!" we had said; with every available horse-boy needed elsewhere. "Seeing we're to make Dan's camp by sundown!" as we pointed out. Merely carrying hobbles,—linked about each horse's neck as their own matter-of-course,—for hobbling-out accessory to chance turn-out and later camp.

And, "anything in the way of a pack-horse," all that was necessary for the simplest carrying of a single swag for a single day! had also been decreed,—with packhorses also more than needed elsewhere: and one "Euclid" had fallen to our lot. "Euclid," all simply, because of "so many points and angles," mental as well as physical.

Also, a few sandwiches and a "screw" of tea in the Maluka's quart-pot,—with a "bite" of tucker stowed away in saddle-pouch for Brown,—surely more than enough for a midday turn-out! With the quart-pot for the making of the tea; and a cup for its drinking dangling from each saddle. While Euclid's "grazing-beat" being of the Gordon's camp "country," his going could only prove a willing ambling home! capped that optimism.

"Indeed, a sadly maligned old horse!" decided that mid-day turn-out: touched with the morning's docile followings by such

track, and river-way, and by-track, as our going had been pleased to meander-in for chance inspection, and the making of a riverside turn-out; and with that turn-out justifying also *its* especial optimism even to half-a-dozen sandwiches and a fair pinch of tea, over and above mid-day needs, going back into the Maluka's quart-pot. "Waste not, want not!" suggested the Maluka, advising that frugal stowing away "lest Dan should be late in his getting-in." "A bird in the hand, you know!" he said. And, had we but known it, the first warning note had been struck.

With by way of other warning, perhaps,—for yet later incident,—Euclid, with that afternoon's long going across trackless bushlands that sweep on then to Gordon's camp, once the river was left behind, was to develop to aggravation the desire to hang-back and loiter, and graze-off at unexpected tangents through the sweet bush-grasses there: as his right, no doubt, over even these borders of his "grazing-beat;" but necessitating by-the-way skirmishing at times through the light timber, and varied assistance from Brown. But with never a warning, beyond a strange surprising stillness as we rode, with the sundown, into Gordon's also lightest timbered outskirts, to tell of the brooding silence and unbroken stillness, and far-reaching emptiness awaiting our tiny cavalcade as greeting, where all should have been stir, and bustle, and every clanking busy-ness of a great cattle camp. "Just as well to be unanimous in these things!" those preparations had appreciated, in whimsical superiority, as Bett-Bett's referendum went on; with now, barely twelve-hour-old tracks of a crowding cattle mob passing-out, in a wide westward sweep, from that so strangly-silent rendezvous, telling only too eloquently that Dan's mob had come-in and gone-on just one day before the allotted time.

And with before the Maluka a loneliest possible isolation for that night's camp: back there from all chance travellers' camps and by-ways; and with it the safeguarding of a woman,—in country, incidentally, touching at its east the beat of "outside" blacks.

"Still, it might very well have been worse!" we decided, with the buoyancy of long use to inconvenience. For had we not our six sandwiches and that left-over pinch of tea!

And as for the horses, had we not also those hobbles for their safe shortest-hobbling?

"And our swag with us, too!" we further rejoiced—swags at times passing-out before us with the stockmen's pack-teams.

And always those sandwiches! Three for supper and three for breakfast. One apiece for each meal, allowing share-and-share-alike with Brown. And with plenty of water,—and a camp-fire, a yet further matter-of-course,—always the easiest boiling of the quart-pot for a supper half-share of the tea; and had we not also the good warm earth beside a glowing camp-fire, for our settling-down in expectant three-cornered supper array. With Brown, it is true, rather disconcerting our share-and-share-alike comradeship by bolting his sandwich at a gulp, and watching reproachfully as we made the most of our every crumb. Still, poor Brown had not the comfort of the tea,—amazingly weak as it might be; and those sandwiches were perhaps overneat in size in accommodating themselves to the dimensions of a quart-pot. Yet how much worse it might have been! as we now carefully explained to a dutifully-attentive Brown. For that night in its passing-on to set itself, apparently, to prove just how much worse it could arrange to be —"when it tried," we were agreeing with the morning.

But with nothing unusual about our turning-in, beyond an exceptionally early turning-in to assure an exceptionally early start: "for the overtaking of breakfast," prompted further optimism. Just the usual swinging of a camp sleeping-net between low-branching saplings near-by, and that swiftest slipping off into deep sleep that is the heritage of the bush-folk; with Brown in his own accustomed place curled-up close outside the net at its head. And just one hour's oblivion; and then the low, subdued warning growl of a trained camp-dog from Brown to scatter sleep to the four winds and bring us to our elbows,

PLAINS OF THE DARLING, N.S.W.

Edward Officer.

mechanically reaching-out for revolvers: with—it will be remembered—Gordon's "country" touching one beat of "outside" blacks.

But never a chance of any sharp barking from Brown that would disclose our position to roving folk of the bush night. And never a chance of even lowest growling, on from that swift coming to attention; but with Brown's ears pricked to the north-east for our guidance: steadily to follow some approaching movement nearer round,—to the bristling of a, then standing, statue-like Brown.

"Some distance off and passing round about the camping ground," translated the Maluka; and slipping-out of the net, masked the now-slumbering fire with heaped-up loose earth. "No necessity to provide a guiding star!" he suggested grimly, with that done, "Yet, probably only some old blackfellow making a passage across country!" we assured ourselves: for that second hour of our night to keep us at tension on elbows, as Brown's ears reported a disconcertingly persistent circling, and hovering, and passing and repassing about the farther-out borders there: a hovering at times breaking-up into three separate hoverings demanding threefold attention from Brown. "Seeking our strength, maybe!" suggested our tension. "Or only eaten-up with curiosity, out of a chance passing-by coming on hobbled-out horses, with never an attendant "boy" responding to mysterious renderings of night-birds' calls;" amended our third hour: in its passing, finding Brown's attention lengthening out always to the southward, eventually, to the ending of all vigil even there, in a long stretching yawn from Brown and a grunting all-satisfied curling-back to a well-earned nap.

"Just as wise though to change the position of our net!" advised bush prudence; with ten minutes later finding us settling down a hundred feet or so deeper into a convenient sapling grove. But in the darkness, unfortunately, camping on the very margin

of a main cattle-pad that led into the waters; as lowing warnings and angry mutterings of our next two hours, and more, made only too clear. With even an overtaking of comparative peace and quiet towards the dawn, as its own last straw, to dumbfound that early start; for sun-up was to find Brown nudging enquiringly into deepest slumbers, and all possibilities of breakfast crudely summed up in those three allotted sandwiches, and further amazingly weak tea,—and further reproaches from Brown.

"But with no limit to the possibilities the tracking-out of the horses might have in store, as a last touch to the whole!" the grimmest throwing-off of every optimism was suggesting, out of grimmest past experiences; as the Maluka's going-out, willy nilly, to that tracking-out, left a disconsolate woman, revolver in hand, backed to a great, wide tree trunk, with a watchful understanding Brown stiffly to attention at her feet. "The wonder is that you do not die of ennui!" being the favourite reiteration of the mail-bags. Also, "No need of a black-boy," it will be remembered, some far-away past had suggested.

But on gallant old Roper I had ridden out of that past. And when was he ever to fail us? Wisest of old campaigners in a wisest making back for his camps with the daylight. And with Roper come on in the Maluka's first half-turn of those outer timbers what else could come about but that Roper would carry the Maluka direct to those dilly-dallying others, to trot them briskly to camp within a bare five minutes. And, "That we should ever have doubted!" we apologized, caressing the beautiful, wise old head. With as merest passing detail now, the Maluka's tracking-out having come on the tracks of some old bush blackfellow and two attendant lubras.

Also: "All's well that ends well!" the Maluka was saying, as another five minutes or so found us riding out across that open country.

But we had not yet done with Euclid. For going west meaning going away from home for Euclid, as a beginning the first mile had us hanging back, and loitering, and heading him off

to set all going again, with a dozen times the incident of the yesterday's afternoon going; for the second mile to find the Maluka seeing what a leading rope would do, to the immediate heart-break of Euclid, who breaking into a pouring sweat had to be rubbed down and unpacked, and made much of and finally repacked, and done with as best we could for a next mile or so. But a mile or so playing such havoc with our direction that Roper and I found ourselves called upon to do our part in a steadiest, sedate going ahead of all skirmishing, with the setting of the compass directing that our going should keep my shadow playing about Roper's near ear,—which was easier decreed than done. A going eventually to eat up exactly three hours for a bare seven miles, with every suggestion of a leading rope only bringing on further cold sweatings and heart-breaks, and further rubbings-down and repackings; and with Brown's the only luck of the whole going, in his catching of an opportune young bandicoot,—to our envy, I fear. But that seventh mile seeing the end to all patience of hunger, and all else, swag and pack-saddle,—at a last aggravating stripping,—were dumped-down beneath a distinguishing tree, to be left-till-called-for by some horse-boy to be sent over our tracks. An arrangement giving opportunity for a last perversity from Euclid, in a thenceforward amiable, persistent, stripped following of all further miles, when his followings had become nothing to us. "Anything in the way of a pack-horse!" as all had agreed.

With, thus, even two hours after mid-day to find us riding into that last great combined cattle-camp, and its plenty, and stir, and ridings, with a stripped pack-horse at our heels—to the amazement of all there; to be greeted by a welcoming call from a sublimely unsuspecting Dan, dutifully riding out from his then concerns. "What happened on Friday?" he called. And: "*We* camped at Gordon," we said, "the prey of prowling blacks and wild bulls; and one of us got down to bandicoot for breakfast, and Euclid's eaten his pack-saddle and swag!" And Dan, staring aghast as we reined-up all together among assembling black boys and stockmen, "Just as well to be unanimous in these things!" we

mocked. "It is now exactly two o'clock, Saturday; and we've lived on three sandwiches for weeks!" leaving Dan petrified beyond an utterly confounded: "Well, I'm blest! I never did that before!" which was little consolation to our hunger.

But the Dandy's billy, as usual, was just about thinking of boiling; to prove indeed that all's very well that ends well: even to Dan's recovery rejoicing in "getting the mob off before the Sabbath, after all!" with the story of that Sabbath, and our days of homeward journey told elsewhere.

Leaving a last rounding-off of all to the homestead and the next week-end; with the filtering-out of our woes to the black world there:—"*Dan* no more savey days, Missus?" Bett-Bett came once again to the verandah to ask; and the spirit of humbug taking hold of Dan, with the Saturday he, too, was at the verandah solemn-eyed as an owl. "Why should not the homestead have made the mistake, and not the musterers?" *he* came to ask. "Making this Sunday!" he said severely, looking askance at my sewing. With no peace then until it was put away, and that day accepted as the Sabbath,—there being logic enough in his argument; and Bett-Bett's doubts were transferred to the Missus.

But next morning Dan was back again, all twinkling seriousness then. "I've been going over that ticking-off," he reported, "and find you and the Boss were right." "Making *this* the Sabbath," he suggested amiably. And with our convictions all with that day's identity, together with vivid word-pictures from Dan of "Scotch ancestors turning in their graves" at the thought of the Missus "going on with sewing there," the house celebrated two Sabbaths that week—to the distraction of Bett-Bett. Until the mailman's coming in from the South "proving the homestead right after all!" was to convince Bett-Bett that the setting of "days" was not the least of his duties.

Melbourne.

Jeannie Gunn

The Gift of St. Michael

Leo H. Dorsey

In the Shadows.

By KATHLEEN WATSON.

THERE are such good things in life—fine music, laughter, health, and love: stars and flowers that shine: the chorus stealing through cathedral aisles at even-song: the meeting and the greeting of a friend.

Richard de la Prez, hard at work on the murky problems of his play, full of distaste at the situation brought about by his own ingenuity, thought with regret of a world that seemed far away —a world that held other things and cherished them.

He thought of his friend, the poet, who had wound incomparable thoughts and words round a theme which was a wilderness of grief.

He thought of his friend, the painter, who also had strayed far from fields elysian and the songs of Pan to burn into his canvas all the desolation of a suicide's grave, with a child skipping past the clumsy mound, fearful and afraid.

The Te Deums and Magnificats—who put them now into colour, music, stone, or verse? They had vanished before the mists of decadence; the minor songs of minor souls; the wails of those crying out in the desert for what they supposed was freedom; fighting against the desperate odds of convention; who, because their hope was forlorn, walked as those having none indeed.

In his heart, Richard de la Prez thought that the sunless outlook of his work was an insult flung from the stage into the faces of the patient public who come to the play, not to see the shadows and drab colours of the long day lengthening behind the foot-

lights: who come in their thoughtless thousands for anodyne, forgetfulness; like children who rush from their lessons to a fairy tale or a game at ball.

No fairy tale, no living-happily-for-ever-after in the work of Richard de la Prez: no such degradation or prostitution of his art. But he would fain have woven into it some of the blue of the June sky outside: some of the rapture of homing birds: some of the gladness of hearts at peace with each other and with all the problems of their lives: for the mutual love of one for one is as some chemical, rare and costly, in which problems are dissolved and disappear.

But so rare it is, this chemical, and from such infinite processes has it been evolved, that most men and women miss it altogether on their pilgrimage; while others may discover it perhaps too late. With a twist at his heartstrings, Richard de la Prez knew that he must not turn to any such solution of the paper problems at his hand. Drab renunciation must ring in the ears of those tired people in front: and the knowledge of that death which is the wages of sin. Since he, the playwright who had arrived, he wrote of lives whose to-morrows were swallowed up in their yesterdays: whose futures were mortgaged with their pasts: whose present meant the paying of a bill—paid by some with grace; by some with bravado or insousiance; by some with bitterness: but always there, without relent, to be paid in full.

Often, too, he thought of the stage antithesis of his own studies of the underworld of suffering—the musical comedies which flooded the town and which were rightly spoken of as having neither music nor comedy in their being.

The Gentle Playgoer in his thousands turned to these and the folly of them, because it is better to smile than to think: better to shake with empty laughter than shiver with dread. Neither his intellect nor his emotions were touched for a moment. There must be some charm between these two extremes of gloom and idiocy still left to conjure with. The sunlit spaces of comedy, high comedy, that often in life save tragedies from materializing:

the sense and taste that step in finely, to tide by the shoals and quicksands that beset: the haven that the worst harassed soul finds sometimes even here: the hope that grows to a rich fulfilment and the promise that ripens to a harvest beyond dreams—they are real, these things; they have been and shall be again, thought Richard de la Prez, though others, and not he, might sing their praise.

Lost in calculations, he did not hear the lunch gong sounding through the deadness of the house. It was the voice of his wife, querulous and high-pitched, on the stairs outside his study, that aroused him.

"Aren't you coming, Dick? Everything's getting cold. And we shall miss the beginning, like we always do."

Then he remembered that he had promised to take her to a matinee.

At lunch she hurried him on and reminded him sharply again, that on no account did she intend to miss the beginning, even if he did.

He glanced at her, and said, so kindly that the irony was hidden quite:

"Ah, my dear, if that was only all that we had missed."

Kathleen Watson Dearden

Brisbane.

The Recruits.

By HENRY LAWSON.

THEY come from the city counter;
They come from the sandy West;
They come from the South Sea Islands—
Our bravest and our best.

They rush from the pen and the tiller,
The shearing machine and the plough;
And the Star of Australasia
Is high in the Heavens now.

Riding, tramping, and sailing—
From home or from never a home;
Over distance and hardship prevailing—
With money, or not, they come.

And each with his secret story,
And all with a common aim:
To sail to a foreign country,
And fight for England's name.

Henry Lawson.

Sydney.

EVENING IN THE DEAD TIMBER,
SOUTH SASSAFRAS, VICTORIA

Hal Gye

The Year Around in Timber-Land.

By C. J. DENNIS.

SUMMER is in her prime, and all the Bush seems like to swoon with drowsy luxury. Beneath a cloudless sky of richest blue the Timber Hills like sleeping mammoths crouch. In serried ranks the tall old trees stand up like quiet sentinels whose sturdy limbs have braved the seasons for a century. They seem so old and wise, these veterans, with mottled trunks scored by stone axes of some long dead tribe; their dignity, their stern impassiveness, seem to upbraid the moods of restless man, the pigmy, ever yearning after change. Beside them, stripling spars grow sturdily; not yet so wise; but, like great healthy lads, they seem impatient for maturity. And infant saplings, with their rich brown leaves up-curled and soft as tiny baby hands, wave wide their limbs, and frolic in the breeze like merry, careless children at their play. The hardy bracken, quickened by the sun, has lost its tenderness of early Spring, and—like a man grown greedy with the years, a sly, alert marauder keen for gain—with slow and cunning fingers reaches out to steal anew the settler's hard-won field.

Nursed in a shallow trough between the hills, the houses of the tiny settlement sleep in the sun—a little world apart. The lazy smoke curls blue above the roofs, telling of industry and toil within, where each lean bush-wife strives—as never strove the women of the towns—to ease the load of labour for her man. Deep in the forest, higher up the mount, the clip of axes and the

drone of saws make music in the sleepy summer noon. A team of bullocks, over dusty tracks, moves, weirdly silent, saving for the creak of waggon timbers. His great whip aloft, their driver hurls upon the patient beasts fierce rolling oaths and wild, rank blasphemies, as guileless as the prattle of a child. His clothes, his face, his hair, a single hue, are coated with the red dust of the track; a monochrome, in which a sudden gleam of white teeth flashes as he loudly roars a cheery greeting to a passing friend. He is in haste, he says, the rain is near, and soon the bush tracks, axle-deep in mire, will stay the labour of the timber teams; so his poor beasts, with sad, protesting eyes, must late and early toil while days are dry. Yet he is but another prophet mocked; for still the tall trees yearn to cloudless skies, and still the rank weeds riot in the sun.

The days wax hotter; over distant hills a wreath of smoke has hovered for a week. Fire! says the bushman. If the north wind stirs before the rain, the mount will be ablaze.

Old Ben, the pensioner, the pioneer of this rough settlement, before the door of his rude hut, sits patiently all day, with rheumy eyes fixed on the smoke-wreathed hills—familiar hills he can no longer see. "Aha," says he, "we'll have it now, for sure. And such a fire as none of yous can mind; one like the blaze that robbed my house and home, one summer—when my missus was alive." And with a hand, not like a human hand, so gnarled it is with years of heavy toil, he hides a moment his old, wistful face, and sighs, "When my poor missus was alive."

A common, age-old tale they all know well: a woman, all too weak for this rough life, a brave, pathetic fight against the Bush, the loneliness, the toil, the drudgery, until—a self-sought death gave her release, and left a man who lived on memories—a dazed, uncomprehending, broken man, who can not realise why here the bush—his kindly bush—should be so pitiless.

The heat still grows; and now, one lurid morn, as hot, and fierce, and fearsome as the breath of some malignant dragon, comes

the wind, the dread north wind that down the gully sweeps, and trails destruction over all the land. Fire springs from no where; here for half-a-mile it leaps a valley and tears on its way with long, red fingers reaching for its prey.

A pall of heavy smoke defies the sun, and in a strange, uncanny twilight stands the little settlement, with all the world shut out.

Now, eager little flames, like small red imps, race o'er the ground and climb the mighty trunks, to set the heads of forest seers ablaze. With harsh artillery of falling trees—giants that crash like thunder to the ground—mingles the sharp incessant fusillade of crackling flame, while all the tortured scrub shrinks from the fire and writhes as if in pain.

About the settlement, like tiny ants whose nest has been disturbed, the people haste. A house saved here; and there, a line of fence is sacrificed, while men rush down to save the Brices' home—and come too late.

And Brice, an arm about his youngest child, looks on with hopeless eyes half humorous; then, turning to a neighbour, laughs and says, " 'Twill boil a billy, anyhow, for tea." Then moves away to mark how much is saved, and plan again the labour of long years.

Then comes the rain; and when next morning dawns it sees a land, black, smoking, desolate—a land to break the hearts of some strong men. But these bush optimists, these giant-hearts, look on it all as part of daily life, repair the damage, and go back to work. The hat goes round for Brice, and halting words of sympathy are tendered; he replies, more briefly yet, "Ribuck! You're white men, boys. Well, Summer's over, anyhow, for sure. We best buck in an' make a cheque by Spring."

With Autumn comes the closing of the roads, and, like a fort preparing for a siege, the mountain folk lay in their winter store of simple fare—flour, sugar, tea and jam. Now are the busy bush-wife's anxious day, and, uncomplaining, she toils on, and asks no praise for all the sacrifice she gives. Bush wives—

bush mothers—giving all their lives bravely to build new homes in this new land—the unsung heroines whose tragedies few know, and yet still fewer understand! But when the children of a mighty land are thrilled with stories of the pioneers—with age-old legends told in peaceful towns—bush-wives, bush martyrs, then, at last, shall win a long-due reverence.

Yet Autumn, here, is like another Spring, a ministering, kindly season she, healing the wounds of that too ardent love that Summer gave. Then, like a clammy pall, comes Winter, and the Bush weeps night and day. Frost lays his finger on all growing things. Fog shrouds the tree-tops on the sodden hills, and, day and night, the weeping of the trees brings thoughts of gloom and longing for the sun.

On days too wet for toil, men gather round the roaring fire of logs in some rude home and talk of simple things, and gossip, too, of absent neighbours and the wrongs they do. There's Bates, who made a cunning deal in cows—a waster, Bates, a low-down rascal he. And Johnson says he would not raise a hand to aid him in his last extremity. With oaths his name is mentioned, and his past raked over to expose his ancient sins. Next morning comes the news that Bates is hurt, and, they who yesterday vowed him a rogue, cast work aside and hasten to his aid. Tender as women, down the mountain-side they bear him. Johnson, his most bitter foe, risks neck and limb to gallop through the dark for help, and, by a miracle, gets through. That's the bush way; the boon of simple minds, the lasting brother-love that underlies all petty strife, and sweetens wondrously the lives of those who toil and live as they.

Shy gold begins to peep through sombre green—the wattle's wedding dress, and Spring is near. The jocund Jacks laugh longer, and pert wrens, in new blue caps, flirt in the undergrowth. Then, suddenly it seems, one golden morn, the Bush awakes, a living, amorous thing. Flowers bloom, birds sing, and all the world puts on its gayest dress to greet the laughing Spring.

After the wattle, blackwood, kurrajong don wedding garb, and gipsy violets carpet the earth, and in the underworld of tiny creatures, pupa cases burst, and gay-winged things dance madly in the sun. The Bush has ceased to weep; and when she smiles, she is a mistress not to be denied. The birds are mating, Winter days are dead, and all the world cries out, "To wed, to wed!"

Bates has recovered. It is Johnson now who does a deal in cows that brings him shame. Down in the settlement, the women say young Sparks, a forward lad, is walking out with Ryan's youngest daughter. It is Spring.

Outside his hut, old Ben, the pensioner, wracked through the Winter by the "rheumatiz," stretches his legs and wags his withered head. "Young folks," he says, and leers; then looks away. " 'Tis Spring. I know, I know. An' well I mind one Springtime, when my missus was alive." . . . And then he rambles in a plaintive tone, asking the Fates what strange thing ailed his mate. "Full forty head of fowls she had," he wails. "What more could woman want? Three pigs she had, an' bacon hangin' on the kitchen wall. What ailed her? Hadn't she the two best cows—the best a woman ever sat beneath? And yet—ah, it's a queer, strange world, it is, an' I should know it after eighty years—an' thirty since my missus was alive."

C. J. Dennis.

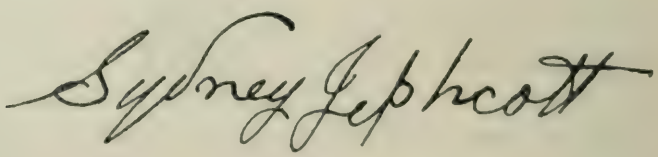
Melbourne.

Bell-Birds at Eden Bay.

By SYDNEY JEPHCOTT.

While the wash of azure wind,
(To yon grieving Ocean kinned)
Like a sentient spirit grieves
In the cloudland of the leaves,
Comes the Bell-Birds' bevy, a last levy out of Elfinland;
Chiming, chiming, through the creepers climbing,
Glossy-green the moist and mossy boles between;
Till you dream the glancing sunshafts dancing Odalisques,
Moving mute and tragic to the magic cymbals' silvern discs.

Else you hear afar a single
Bell-beat tingle, tingle, tingle,
Till a mazy myriad mingle;
As tho' the Stars all sang anew
Together, buried in the blue.
Then all lulls and lessens into quivering quiescence
Through the musky depths bedewed and dusky, where all day the night-moths wing;
Where your senses yet in still suspenses feel the Bell-Birds ring.



Upper Murray.

The Women's Part.

By WILL LAWSON.

THEY loosed the troopship's mooring chains,
Her throbbing engines swung;
And down the crowded harbor-lanes
A track of white she flung.
Into the slow Pacific surge
Her high bows drove, in foam,
Towards the ocean's misty verge,
Away from us and home.

The sunburned faces that we knew,
By distance dim were blurred;
The warm Pacific wind that blew
Brought us no shouted word.
We could but watch with quivering lip,
As women must—and pray
That God would guard the rolling ship
That carried them away.

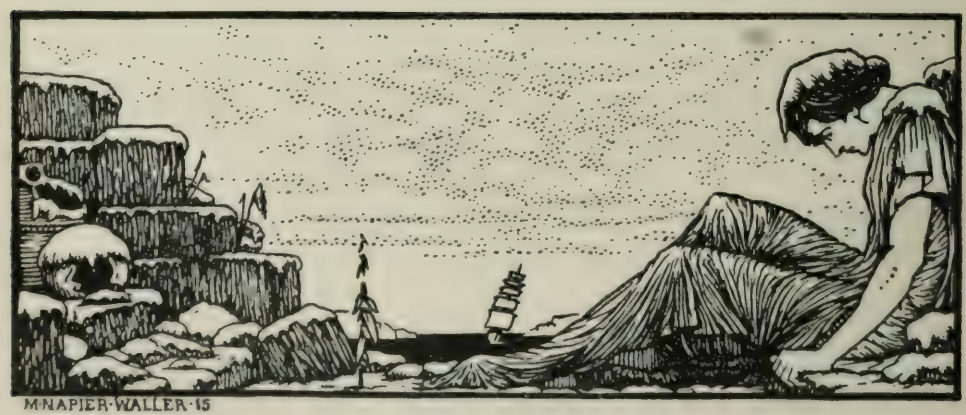
The troopship faded in the mist
And, as she went, we heard
No message from the lips we'd kiss't
But, like a spoken word,

Her whistle boomed, across the sea,
Just one sad call, "Goodbye!"
And oh! the future seemed to be
Vague as the sea and sky.

We wait and pray to see dear eyes
And laughing lips again—
To hear a voice, whose echo dies
In restless dreaming, when
We wake in Night's encircling gloom
And, in the silence, list—
To hear that mournful whistle boom
Out of the darkening mist.

Will Lawson

Sydney.



OLD DUTCH

Charles Nuttall

The Passing of the Cloud.

By FRANKLIN PETERSON.

THE angry Sun had taken a long time to go, stopping on his way every now and again to shake a fist at the quarrelling nations. It was after dark, but somehow his blood-red shadows still seemed to lie across the earth.

The Woman In The Moon flung away her after-dinner cigarette, and, as its glowing butt went shooting through space, an American savant won three days' notoriety for himself by the discovery of what he fondly imagined was a new comet. Then, as the Woman looked earthwards, she gave a little half-shiver, half-shudder, and hastily drew a grey gossamer cloud over her beautiful face.

"Why are you hiding the light of your eyes, lady mine?" It was Pierrot who spoke—poor infatuated Pierrot, who went down to the pond at the foot of the garden each night, so that he could gaze upon not only his love, but her reflection as well.

"Because I dare not look down on what I must see," she answered.

"But listen to me," pleaded Pierrot. "Million upon million of women on earth here below are facing this night bravely. Fearlessly they look out into the darkness, waiting for what the dawn may bring. Why should you, who have seen the wars of all the ages, shrink from the truth?"

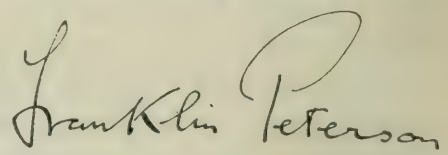
"Pierrot," she replied gently, "each one of these women has to fear her own sorrows alone. I have to sit here helplessly, witnessing and suffering the sorrows of them all."

And when Pierrot, yearning for a sight of her face, would have spoken of love, she sealed his lips with a long white finger and drew the cloud more closely about her head. . . . Sud-

denly, from far down below, there came a tiny cry, where some newly-born child had been thrust by Fate on to the scale of humanity so sadly overbalanced by the God of War.

The Woman In The Moon, sighed softly. "They still need me on earth, I see," she whispered, half to herself and half to Pierrot. . . . A baby moonbeam went frolicking away to dance through a dark bedroom window and play with its little mortal brother. . . . And with her own hands, jewelled with a hundred stars, The Woman In The Moon slowly drew the veil from off her face.

Melbourne.

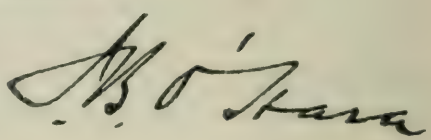


In the Forest.

By J. B. O'HARA.

HERE is the everlasting calm that fills
The lawny slopes of mountains, pure and free
As the wild breezes that exultingly
Blow thro' the barren cleavage of the hills;
Here is the freedom from the strife that kills
The larger life of human sympathy—
Youth, faith, and love—all things that sweeter be
For the forgetting of life's sordid ills.
O silent forest, in thy dim recess,
In cloistral solitudes at nature's shrine,
A reverent acolyte, the chaliced wine
With prayer and benediction low I bless,
And at the altar of a peace divine
Worship the spirit of all loveliness.

Melbourne.



Will Dyson

The Hot Air-man.

"New Types of airships are being constructed. They will have long-range guns and machine guns, will be armoured, will be fitted to carry two tons of explosives, and will be capable of rising to a high altitude."

Count Zeppelin's Private Secretary to a Swiss interviewer.

JOHN BULL: "Madame, let us not needlessly alarm ourselves. When pricked it will, in all probability, prove to be more of that fellow's hot air."

If We Had Never Met.

By PROFESSOR J. LAURENCE RENTOUL.

IF we had never met, my love,
If we had never met,
The same blue skies would bend above,
The same moons rise and set:

The same glad birds would sing their song
By hill and glen and lea,
The same bright rivers dance along
All-eager to the sea.

And wistful morns of hope would dawn
And broaden into day,
A gleaming dawn on field and lawn
Above man's work and play.

And gentle eves would dusk the dale,
By roadside or by lane,
Where Robin tells his stammering tale
To Makin's heart again.

But, ah, my soul unsatisfied
Would go a hungering yet
If you had not come to my side,
If we had never met!

J. Laurence Rentoul.

Melbourne.

Under Fire.

By DONALD MACDONALD.

IN that exquisite languor which follows sometimes upon long physical effort—sometimes upon short superlative strain—Private Jack Hunter was lying in the sand, every tired muscle of his overworked body relaxed. In the distance he watched rose-coloured Arabs leading rose-coloured camels to a rose-coloured Nile. All about him was that rose light of a fading Egyptian day, which transfigures everything, and is the wonder and glory of the East. Far away the wedge top of Sinai, gray in daylight as its own traditions, jutting just over the more sordid surrounding peaks, was clothed and softened in the same rose light. He was wondering—as so many thousands have done before him—whether the Red Sea took its name from this magical aurora, or the less romantic red scum of pelagic fish eggs and desert dust that so often floats upon it.

His lazing reverie was broken by the thudding of a horse's hoofs upon the everlasting sand.

"Come on, Jack," shouted his friend and fellow-townsman, Jim Driscoll. "We're off at last. No more sand and sore eyes. The word has come—it's ship and sea to-morrow. How do you feel about it?"

Even the thrill of that glad news hardly stirred Hunter. He rose wearily. "If it means the front and fighting," he said, "I don't quite know. I often wonder, Jim, how the actual thing itself may find some of us out."

"I don't," replied Driscoll. "If they'll show us the blighters, we'll do the rest. Only I hope they're Germans, not Turks."

"That's unlikely," said Hunter, quietly. "We happen to be just about where men are certain to be wanted. It's Constantinople for a dollar, and we'll be fighting before we know it. How do the chaps feel about it?"

"They're fair mad with excitement. The camel meeting has been abandoned."

This was one of the pleasantries of the desert camp amongst men stale from overdrill, sullen sometimes in their attitude towards it and to authority. "Never mind, chaps," some cheerful satirist would say, "we'll have races on New Year's Day."

"Now we'll show some of those gasbags and goody-goodies at home whether we're fighters or wasters," Driscoll exclaimed hotly. "The boys are burning for a chance."

"The chance may be hot enough when it comes to burn in another way," observed Hunter.

"If I didn't know you, Jack, I'd think you were a grouse. Fighting! God—that's what we came for, and we can't get it too soon."

"It's just the difference in the point of view," explained his chum slowly. "I dare say we'll do pretty well—most of our fellows will, I swear."

"They're as keen for it," said Driscoll, "as Bill's old dog for a go at a fox—and they'll lick their wounds just as cheerfully afterwards."

"I haven't a doubt of it. But between ourselves, Jim, and talking as old friends, I've often asked myself whether I'm the right kind of man to go with them. That sort of feeling comes mostly in the middle of the night when the wind is up and the sand swishes on the tent. I wouldn't whisper it to anyone but you."

Jim laughed. "Look here, Jack, are you pulling your own leg?—for I'll be hanged if you're pulling mine. I know you,

and most of the fellows know you too, and when it comes to sticking, the closer I am to you the better I'll feel about it."

So these two talked, the big, buoyant man, Jim Driscoll, splendid embodiment of health and strength and fitness, the resolute bull-dog type, who never count odds, whom nothing can daunt; and the slighter, taller, more thoughtful one, not naturally a fighter, yet fortified by moral courage in a higher form—a man in whose nature was a strong spice of sentiment and romance, and who, more strangely still, was not ashamed to show it. He had yet one other quality which under stress may be uncertain to a dangerous degree—a quality which sometimes exalts the man to a demigod, and occasionally debases him to a cringing slave. It was Imagination.

* * * * * *

Through the end of the fresh-cut trench in which Jack Hunter lay, again exhausted, shone the dazzling blue of the Aegean Sea. The scene and the colour of the scene had changed —so, too, his emotions. In front of him a long ascending slope of Spring green, seamed across with scars of fresh red earth, lifted to a pinnacle that was smoothed and shaped into the rough landscape—yet manifestly smoothed by hand, not by Nature—the escarpments of a Turkish battery.

He and his countrymen were being tried out in the red crucible of war—all the baser metal of humanity fluxed out of them by fire. Here upon the very doorstep of a new and dramatic experience they had suffered the ordeal which tries even the veteran to his last ounce in resistance. For three successive days they had been fighting and advancing constantly under fire. They found the first day less trying than Story and Tradition had led them to believe. Their hearts had thumped a little harder, a little faster than usual—their arms were so stiff and tired at night that they knew they must have gripped their rifles very hard. Their lips had dried often and quickly, though their tongues were always trying to moisten them. For the first time—even though they had

camped and drilled in a desert—they realized the luxury of a water-bottle, while regretting that it held so little, that it was so often empty when they most needed it. Yet there was always the comfort of contact, the pride of race which makes almost every man of nearly every race willing to dare what his mates so eagerly do. And what splendid fearless fellows all their mates were! How eager in attack, how indifferent to consequences.

On the second day, still attacking under fire, Jack Hunter found the strain rather worse. There was no longer any desire to eat—the sight of meat was almost revolting. To talk was an exertion, to think was sometimes a torture.

On the third day tension had become extreme. Jack Hunter had reached the questioning stage. Nerves, never before tested to that supreme stage, had thrilled and tingled so often that composure seemed wholly gone. Most of the man, and his muscles most of all, craved for rest and recuperation, but nerves would neither sleep nor rest. Imagination, too, was vividly alert. It was a new baptism, and the ceremony seemed eternal. As his physical powers weakened Imagination grew, became distorted, and took possession of him. He had realized the psychology of battle in all its unexpectedness—and the unexpected was so horribly disconcerting. He feared the enemy less than he feared himself, for all his self-questioning and introspection led inevitably to the one conviction that, if it happened again, he might funk.

He looked around often to his comrade on the left and there, in contact with strength and courage, found momentary comfort, but not invigoration. Jim Driscoll's face was rigidly set, not a muscle moved. It was the fighting face which knows, or seems to know no faltering. As an eruption of earth and smoke and fire from one of the *Queen Elizabeth's* shells leaped high into the air, the fighting face relaxed for an instant, and Driscoll laughed gleefully, irresponsibly. Never had Jack Hunter admired anything more on earth, longed for anything so much as the unmoved, unbreakable spirit of his mate. For time and time again, as he

THE TIRED DANCER

C. Douglas Richardson

lay there, the one unspeakable fear came back and took possession of him—"If it happens again, I'll funk it."

His captain came, stooping, running down the trench. "Now, lads, get ready," he said, with a dry hard catch in his voice, from which all resonance and modulation had gone. "We've got to take that ridge, and I want volunteers to cut those wires at the foot of the slope in about twenty places."

The one thing about which Jack Hunter felt profoundly, uncomfortably sure at the moment, was that he had no intention of volunteering.

"I'll do it, sir," said Driscoll, eagerly. "Me too, Mister," drawled an unemotional footballer, one of the wasters of the regiment, whose misdeeds in the fields of sport had been the despair of umpires and stewards. It was very casual, altogether unheroic.

And to Jack Hunter came again the supreme test. Impulse, Duty, and Prudence tugged at him hard, but in different ways. It seemed to him that his captain would read in his face all his fears—they were so overpowering that they must be manifest. Yet with a great moral effort he gasped, "I'll go with Jim, sir," and in the next instant came the conviction that the end of all things was close at hand.

"All right, my lads, you'll do it," said the captain, and had he followed his impulse he would have said softly, "My children!" "Take these wire-cutters and wait for the word. You will be covered by the fire of the ships. Make your dash as soon as the shells begin to burst on the ridge. And when the way is clear, wave your arms. Call up the naval station, signaller, and tell them we're ready. Thank you, boys, and good luck to you!"

There was not long to wait. In a sudden concussion that shook Australian hill the ships' guns opened, and twenty seconds later the crest of Battery ridge was tossing like a red, rough sea.

"Go!" shouted the captain. "We're off!" yelled Jim Driscoll, less excitedly perhaps than if he were watching the start for the Melbourne Cup. Hunter was the last to leave the trench,

though in self-punishment he had sworn to himself that he would be first.

As he ran down the slope a lesser note of fire began to punctuate the intermittent turmoil of bursting bombs in front. In his vividly receptive state of mind the trivial and the awful were strangely blended. For the first time in the three days' ordeal he noticed that there was a double report from rifles fired towards him, that the "bap-bap" of the single shot was quickening up into a ripple, the ripple becoming an unbroken drumming, and that the sibilant sound that died so quickly behind him was death whispering close to his ear.

Two of the brown runners checked, crumpled up, suddenly collapsed and were still, and the thought in Hunter's brain in this long run that seemed never to reach its goal, was "Not one of us will live to get there—not one. We're done, we're done." He suddenly realized that he was shouting his thoughts, but that he was still running towards the wires. Then came a horrible drumming in his ears—his temples were not merely throbbing, they were lifting. Fits of violent anger and abject fear possessed him in turn. He had reached the limit. In this mental hell which was so much his own imaginative creation, his legs became lead and his blood turned to water. He wanted to turn and run, run till he reached the sea, and then swim. The moral power that had kept him moving could sway no longer. Manhood and patriotism and pride might all go to the devil. He would run the other way for the sake of that one life which was all he had to live. What was he doing there, after all? What business was it of his? He half turned, fell over a wire—and reaching the objective saved him. The pain and the drumming and the throbbing never ceased for an instant, but he realized that he was cutting the wires—where or how he knew not, but there were loose ends of wire relaxing and coiling about him. He began to wave his arms. As he waved he felt a sting across one hand, and from the red weal the blood trickled down his palm. Looking at it an instant he felt the darkness closing upon him. Then a great gust of rage,

coupled with a sort of self-hate. Was he a girl that this scratch should so overpower him? It was ridiculous. He knew as a student that it was only blood fear—the bane of his race, yet in spite of his knowledge he was weakening, fainting. But the hand without the bullet mark still waved, and stopped only when, with a long restful sigh, he rolled over amongst the weeds at the hill foot. For the bullet which creased his hand had also passed through his body.

* * * * * *

For perhaps ten seconds the darkness possessed him, then the light came with a beautiful stillness. And as the regiment had not yet charged he began automatically to wave his arm overhead.

"Why do you do that, Mr. Hunter?" asked the Sister who watched and waited.

"Because we've got to take the hill," he said wearily; "the regiment are coming on. Get away from here or you'll be killed."

"That's all over," said the nurse. "It happened three days ago. You are wounded; and in hospital; you must keep quiet." She caught the arm which still waved, and held it firmly down.

He waited a little while, for the great fear, though less intense, still possessed him. "Sister," he asked feebly, "tell me the truth. Did I funk it?"

She laughed. "You dear egotist—you just want me to say how proud we all are of you. The Brigadier has mentioned you in orders for 'coolness and daring in a desperate service.' Please rest now."

He looked at her hard, but in the Sister's face was nothing but sincerity.

"Coolness and daring!" he gasped. "Good God!"

Donald Macdonald

Melbourne.

In the Vanguard.

By RODERIC QUINN.

WHAT time the nations slumbered,
Their war-thoughts put away,
A creeping, crouching Monster
Made ready for the fray.

He sprang: a war-horn sounding
Aroused them from their rest;
They saw the avid Monster—
His claws in Belgium's breast.

Their veins ran red with anger,
They rose with souls aglow;
And lit with glorious purpose
Made onset on the foe.

For Belgium, Home and Honour,
While this foul Monster lives,
Our Empire gives her life-blood,
Nor cares how much she gives.

The sunshine on their faces,
The fine light in their eyes,
Spurred on by splendid manhood,
The young Dominions rise.

They rise, a shining legion,
To scale far glory-heights—
Australia in their vanguard
With deathless valour fights.

Sydney. Roderic Quinn

Carnival.

By TARELLA QUIN (Mrs. Daskein).

"It has been a jolly day," said the man, looking between the wet canvas curtains of the motor launch at the wet trees sliding by, "hasn't it?"

"Very," answered the girl.

In both voices the unemotional note of sincerity trying to convince itself kept both pairs of eyes on the grey, drooping rainscape drifting past.

"Anyhow *I* have enjoyed it," continued the man, a trifle assertively. He pulled a damp coat collar higher about his ears, and settled his cap more comfortably.

The girl moved nearer to him to avoid a patch of damp that was spreading insidiously along the velvet cushions and, pulling the curtain towards her, peeped out.

"There will be no carnival to-night," said the man regretfully, "a pity—a great pity!"

"But the rain has stopped. Perhaps——"

"It will come on again."

"I don't think so. The clouds are breaking down at the edge—look! pale grey through those wet rags! it's hard to remember that there has been a fair day shining behind all the time. It is clearing."

"There'll be no moon though."

"All the better! She would be fair mad—" laughed the girl "—to see herself eclipsed. Come and let's roll up the curtains—

the rain's over for a bit, at any rate. Ugh! how clammy and uncomfortable everything is! But it's over; yes, it is over. Perhaps a boat or two may hang out a light by-and-bye."

Together they rolled up the wet canvas, slim brown hands and sinewy ones working swiftly, and the view of the river widened out before them. The leaden water was transformed to a steel-grey mirror shining with light that gleamed below the clouds; and far away a few lights winked damply, barely visible yet, glow-worm points in the soft grey shadows that were settling over Sydney.

The man took off his cap and leant on the rail beside the girl, conscious of her vigour, life and youth, though the greyness of the dusk was in her eyes just now, and the shadows on her sunny head.

Their faces faded as the darkness crept over the water.

"No carnival, I'm afraid," said the man again, indicating the dim houses and gardens on the steep banks as they glided past, "and it was to have been a great night."

"Well, let us hang out our lights, then," cried the girl suddenly. "I shan't go home until I've had my carnival after this long grey day. Our spirits can't be quenched by rain—quick! where are the lanterns?"

"Here they are—fixed and ready."

"Light them all, then. No, I'll light them and you hang them all around the launch. We'll go down alone in beauty to Sydney like a dying swan," laughed the girl, scratching a match and bending over the glow. It lit her down-bent face with flickering lights that smiled. Pulling the lantern out to its full length she handed the first yellow globe to the man, and, as their hands touched, her eyes met his in the lantern glow. Both were smiling. The light painted curves and shadows full of mirth and revelry where an hour ago there had been a grave decorum.

One by one, the incandescent globes trembled out in the darkness, circling the launch about without illuminating it, and dropping reflections that ran like melted gold in the moving ripples.

It was as though a thousand gold-fish swam enchanted about the moving craft.

The girl sounded shrill defiance upon their siren to wake the attention of the sleeping river, then, taking the middle stream, they glided through the darkness. The river heard the call; the sleeping gardens woke and stirred; houses peeped through winking eyes; and from the tree-crowned heights the great god Pan looked down, stroking his beard, lost for a moment in reflection.

"Ah! men go mad again to-night," said the god; "they chase the gods from Arcadia with mirth and revelry." He did not raise his reed to his lips, knowing the Syrinx would be dumb to-night. Its shrill clear fluting could not blend with the "broken music" of men's cracked brains. Looking, he was filled with despair. Speechless rage surged through him, incoherent and wild. Opening his mouth he uttered his dreadful shout—that shout that has terrified the world for ages and is heard but seldom now—then turned and plunged into the shadows that closed behind him. Silenty faun and dryad slipped away till, in the tree-crowned heights, only the brownies, sprites and impshies remained. These crept cat-footed amongst the shadows down to the water's edge and sat grinning, their arms about their knees. Man's folly found an echo in their own breasts, such being the sociability of wickedness.

As the night stirred to life, tiny lights woke as by magic, rippling in a chain of fire down the gardens to the river's brink, flittering like fire-flies where the ripples ebbed and flowed. They climbed post and pillar and pergola and there burst into starry bloom, flinging sprays into the darkness or hanging festoons that looped and looped, disappearing behind a bend of the river to reappear in fire-lit trees beyond.

"Oh!" cried the girl, leaning out, "Oh! *oh!*"

"To-night," said the man, turning to her and covering her hand that lay on the rail with his, "it were folly to be wise!"

"You look like the Spirit of Carnival!" she made answer, bewildered at the change in him. "Were I an artist I would paint you with little wings about you—at your heels and on your cap and

a torch of flaming fire in your hand!" He saw her mouth laugh and her eyes shining like stars as the golden lantern swung.

"And you?" he asked eagerly, staring.

"I am Folly. Oh! don't speak a serious word to-night! I am Folly in cap and bells, painted and powdered."

"Then you are the mate of the Spirit of Carnival! Mad Folly, be my queen!"

He put his arm about her and the two young faces, with cool cheek laid to sun-tanned cheek, were lit by the golden lanterns. They leant out, laughing.

Presently, up the Lane Cove River, floating, gliding, wafting, crept out a fleet of fairy craft, beautiful with light, putting out from bay and cove to join the revellers, and sliding over the water as jewelled dragon-flies might slide, blown by a wanton wind. Once a boat with lanterns, poppy-red, passed with noise of laughter and song. As they glided by, the merry revellers lit a red flare that burnt up the night and turned the water into a running river of fire, showing laughing men and girls in garments of demon red. They passed away with laughter, and the man and girl saw the red flare appear and re-appear at intervals along the sparkling river.

"The spirit of the Tango!" cried the girl. "They were playing Tango music. Oh, how mad and bad it is!"

"But, ah, alas, how sweet!" added the man.

A tiny yacht, with all its ropes and rigging spun of yellow light as though a fire-spider had been busy in the night, blew by with clash of fairy bells, glass that tinkled low, chimed and rang, and they heard it passing away, a wandering Spirit of Music, spinning a web of dancing lights about it in the water.

And all was beauty without a warring note of harsh electric light.

Flares that leapt and wavered, little fire-devils, licked about the water's edge, bending in a dance that writhed and wriggled like a thousand crimson snakes. Everywhere the mellow gleam of lanterns, the wavering tongues of candles and of fairy lamps lit the dark night, while the moon caught up the skirts of her grey

YARRA GLEN

J. Mather.

domino of clouds before her face, that she might not see the thousand thousand eyes that mocked her. Deep in the river it was as though "tinsel-slippered Thetis" walked with her nymphs below the waves.

"Oh, Folly!" cried the man, "I love you! dearest, be mine for ever. Why shouldn't you be Folly and I Carnival all our days through?"

He worshipped her with his eyes, her flushed cheeks, tilted laughing mouth, warm throat melting into golden shadows, and he saw the mocking laughter on her face.

"Nay, dear Carnival," she cried, "this is the time for mirth and revelry, not love! 'Colours seen by candle-light will not look the same by day!' Don't spoil it! don't spoil it, dear, dear Carnival!"

More lights swung out from nowhere, more fairy craft skimmed by; big trembling lanterns pendant from the ends of curved bamboos showed where small rowing boats flitted amongst the bigger craft like wills-o'-the-wisp slipped out of elf-land. And the hours chased each other on glowing feet. Where they trod they left the darkness golden.

Here and there, where the water had time to calm its agitation, the running lights merged into molten splashes that lay flat and shining like skate of gold slithered from a fisherman's creel in a wet market-place; and the next moment were shattered to a thousand fragments by the passing of a fire-lit boat—dancing sparks of gold eluding pursuit, but gathering up its treasure and running together of itself the next moment to form molten splashes as before and lie like shining skate in a wet market-place.

Fire in water—broken diamonds—running gold—the Carnival swept on!

Silent craft that were beautiful as spectres gliding; mad gay crews possessed by a spirit that drove them ever on; streams of light fleeing, doubling, and returning, glittering like water-serpents sporting; music hanging low above the water; snatches of laughter

and of song; a dreaming river wakened and intoxicated, joining in a wild Bacchanalia to worship the god of revels, its waters running fire instead of wine, and the trees upon its banks bursting into sparkling bloom for flowers; youth crowned with joy—thus swept by the Carnival. A fairy scene, a cunning scene, a scene of beauty fashioned by Hephaestus! At last—oh sad!—the dancing hours wore their golden slippers through. The fire-spiders' work was over, their shining webs were broken. Glow-worms faded one by one and sank into greyness and the fire-flies closed their wings and showed their fairy lamps no more.

"Oh, dear!" cried the girl regretfully, "the lights are going out—oh! *oh!*"

There were gaps in plenty now amongst the chains of light; necklaces and festoons were broken—many, many links were missing. Lights gleamed and licked and faded, then burnt low, burnt lower and went out. The little boats, like tired birds, were going home. One by one they went sailing away and came no more; and at last the little launch with one lantern burning still, was left alone—the last. It, too, was going home.

The moon dropped her silver domino and looked down. The girl was gazing backwards along the moonlit stretches of the river that wound into shadows, and the light of revelry had left her face.

"Dearest, it is over," whispered the man. "Folly and Carnival are gone. Only Love is left—the last—and only Love is wise."

"Then," said the girl softly, slipping her hand into the big strong hand that sought it, "teach Folly to be wise."

And the kindly moon hid her face again.

Jarilla Jackett.

Broken Hill.

Help Her Now!

By D. W. McCAY.

YOU cheer for the Belgian heroes,
You gibe at the German gun,
You rave about Modern Neros,
But tell me—what have you done?
They turned from the Kaiser wooing
With promise of peace and pelf;
You shout with joy for their doing—
But what have you done yourself?

You look at your soldiers going,
A handful, into the field
Where a river of blood is flowing
From the men who never can yield;
You gaze at a people shattered
For a cause that was great and true,
Where freedom was all that mattered—
But what have they got from you?

You live in a land unshaken
By the noise of a distant war;
Its echoes but half awaken
Your heart to what it is for.
In place of the Belgian border
The map has a crimson blot;
And that was the Kaiser's order—
Are you in the game; or not?

Your wheat is ripe for the reaping,
Your flocks are fit for the shears,
But the women of Belgium, weeping,
Look out on the hopeless years.
Your ships, with their cargoes laden,
Sail safe, and in safety rest—
Have you thought of the Belgian maiden
With a bayonet in her breast?

A country, stricken and bleeding,
Whose torn face stares to the sky,
The best you can give is needing,
Ere the suffering children die;
Oh, you who would pause or palter
With question of when or how!
She lies upon Freedom's altar—
Are you going to help her—NOW?

D. W. McCay.

Sydney.

The Tricolor.

By GUY INNES.

["Endure and fight."—President Raymond Poincare's watchword to the defenders of France.]

FAITHFUL to death, the banner that you bear
Raise for the right;
Daring to strive, and striving still to dare,
Endure and fight!

Red, White, and Blue, the glorious guidons glow
O'er your advance:
Red for the living blood that yet must flow
To ransom France;

White for the hope that evermore endures
Through direst need,
And for the great occasion still ensures
The greater deed;

Blue, heaven's eternal hue, for him who dies
Before the guns
To keep a free domain beneath free skies
For freedom's sons;

Fate dyes your country's standards thus, that soar
On eagles' wings,
In threefold pledge that you will give to war
Three steadfast things—

Honor and fame and life—and, giving all,
Thrice win reward
Of honor, fame, and death, when comes the call
To wield the sword.

Advance! Britannia's legions march beside;
Her hope is such
As yours; her pride it is to share your pride
Who dare so much;

March on, devoted comrades, until death
Or glory dawn;
Know only, that for this God gave you breath—
March on, march on!

Unto the last, whate'er that last may be—
Or day, or night;
Silence, or psalm; defeat, or victory;
Endure and fight!

Guy Innes

Melbourne.

Jim.

By E. S. EMERSON.

THERE is a kind of settled gloom—
A sort of all-day valley-mist—
That has a hold, in ev'ry room,
Like some unseen antagonist.
And all about the house and farm
The simple joys that were our wont
Have disappeared or lost their charm,
Since Jim, our Jim, went to the front.

I watched the wife awhile ago
Setting the table for our tea,
Deep lost in thought, with movements slow,
A place for her, a place for me,
And, as in days that have gone by,
The old accustomed place for Jim;
Then, with a smothered sob and sigh,
She stopped, and tried to joke of him.

O, she is brave! I've tried and tried
A hundred times to do the same,
And simulated joy and pride
That Jim, our Jim, had played the game;
But all the while my heart is sore,
And all the while I know that she
Prays for the only child she bore,
And adds a postscript prayer for me.

Last Sunday at the fall of night
Another to our fireside came,
And almost in a manner light
And frivolous she spoke his name.
"It's alright, dear old Mum," she said,
"Old Jimmer knows a thing or two;
Don't you go worrying your head;
I know the old chap will pull through."

But when I'd taken down the Book,
And read the lesson for the day,
She took in hers old hands that shook,
And knelt between us both to pray.
Then, to my heart of hearts I felt
The strong faith of her youth pass out,
And words forsook me as I knelt,
For I had deadened hope with doubt.

I know that sobs came to me there;
I know I trembled on my knees;
I know I stumbled through the prayer—
"Do with him, Lord God, as you please;
But keep him worthy of his race
And the traditions made for him."
But she, with love-lights in her face,
Prayed simply—"Make us worthy Jim."

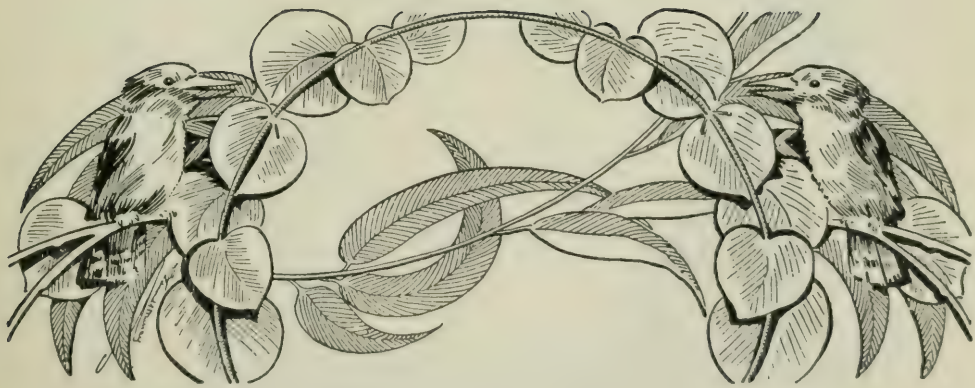
* * * * * *

BELGIAN ROSE DAY

Still, there's a kind of settled gloom—
A sort of all-day valley-mist—
That's got a hold, in ev'ry room,
Like some unseen antagónist.
And all about the house and farm
The simple joys that were our wont
Have disappeared or lost their charm,
Since Jim, our Jim, went to the front.

E. S. Emerson

Brisbane.



The Ancientry.

By EDWARD A. VIDLER.

RIPE fruit and luscious was the load they bore,
Those gnarled old boughs of ancient trees;
I see them bear their burden evermore,
Their choice, rich burden of a generous store,
Those gnarled old boughs of ancient trees.
I see fulfilled the promise spring-tide wore,
Reward of age rank youth doth hunger for;
The saplings' fruit rots, green from rind to core,
But ripe and luscious fruit those ancients bore,
Those gnarled old boughs of ancient trees.

Melbourne.

Ethel Jackson Morris, del.

Ocean Eggs.

By "KODAK" (Ernest O'Ferrall).

A TALL man sprawled wearily on a deck-chair far at sea and longed hopelessly for eggs. For some reason, too stupid to detail, he had taken passage on one of starvation line of steamers trading to Australia, and poor food, regularly administered by grinning black idiots, had reduced him to a state of semi-starvation. The longing for eggs—beautiful, fresh-laid eggs—had taken hold of his mind in mid-ocean. The tall yellow funnel that smoked gravely and swayed from side to side with the blundering hull, reminded him of spilt yolk. The flaky clouds that slid high overhead, floated down the skies and posted themselves in the invisible slot on the horizon between the sea and the sky, made him think of the delicious "white" that lined the shell. He dozed and half-dreamed of old-time wrecks from which half-drowned wretches floated ashore on hen-coops. Hen-coops! If the ancient wind-jammers with their exposed decks could carry living egg-machines, why couldn't these steamers do it? He struggled out of his chair with a curse and, jamming his cap over his eyes, went reeling along the windswept deck to the bridge ladder.

The first officer, whose watch it was, on hearing the hail at his feet, stopped his endless promenade and looked down at the angry, sunburned face. "Hullo! how goes it now?"

"Eggs!" (The wind cut the shout in two, but the listener got the faint small half of it.)

"Don't understand you!"

"I want some eggs—can't *get* 'em!"

"Oh, *we* never carry eggs!"

"Why don't you carry hens?" shouted the red, upturned face. "The old windjammers used to carry hens!"

"Owners too mean!" said the first officer. The quartermaster shifted his feet and fiddled with the wheel. The ship slid forward to a blue abyss and gravely fell into it. The passenger clutched at the rail, looked upward at the straight yellow funnel, swore, and staggered back to his chair. The first officer laughed to himself and resumed his promenade.

Back on the shadowy main-deck, the tall passenger met a meek-looking man who was returning morosely from a health-tour which hadn't done him any good. With the invalid was his dejected little wife. The tall passenger, who had exhausted all his reading-matter and was bored, started to excite both these people on the subject of eggs. He had determined to raise a sort of egg-mutiny. He found that he had acquired two loyal assistants. Ashore, it seemed, the meek-looking man lived almost exclusively on eggs and medicine. Being without eggs for six weeks meant that he had to practically exist on medicine alone. With a little encouragement from the tall passenger and some goading by his wife, he became quite furious about the lack of eggs. He said he would do what he could and use his influence, which, so he hinted, was considerable. And the steamer listened to it all and rolled solemnly on its way. Also the horizon remained a blank. No land loomed up which might harbor hens.

That afternoon, when the dreamy, monotonous mid-ocean morning seemed a whole year astern, the two elderly maiden ladies who had hitherto held aloof from the rest of the passengers, were introduced into the egg conspiracy by the little wife of the meek-looking man. They knew all there was to know about eggs, having managed a hen-farm and actually made a living out of the rash experiment. They proved over and over again that with reasonably good management the wretched steamship company could have supplied every passenger with nine fresh eggs every

day and made a profit out of it to boot. This was all written down by the tall passenger, who was working up the case against the henless ship. When he got ashore he intended to have a complete torpedo ready which would blow the company out of the water so far as hen-fruit was concerned. He wanted to submarine them completely on the question, and hold them up to shame and ridicule. If he had had anything interesting to do he might not have devoted himself to the matter; but it was a dull ship's company and the consistent policy of starving kept his indignation alive. As the days rolled by, the other passengers drifted into the conspiracy and an otherwise useless young man who was popularly regarded as half-witted produced a sarcastic egg poem which was conned with delight. By the time the Westralian coastline showed as a faint blue stain, the ship's company were united on the subject. Even the elderly clergyman who suffered from biliousness and dared not look at an egg, was burning with holy indignation on behalf of everybody else. He explained to several people that he thought it was his duty to take a part in every deserving movement, and that the agitation for fresh eggs appealed to his sense of fairplay. He told the assembled passengers that he considered no sacrifice too great if it resulted in subsequent travellers getting the fresh food to which they were entitled. He reminded them that, the voyage being nearly over, they were fighting (he called it "fighting") not so much for themselves as for those who would come after them. He said it was very noble and high-minded of them, and they cheered him to the echo. Those who were too old to cheer looked very stern and mumbled, "Hear, hear!" It really seemed as if such a devoted band of food crusaders had never before fallen together by chance. When the meeting broke up, the elderly clergyman said to the meek-looking invalid that it was a very inspiring movement; and the meek invalid retorted that it almost made him feel glad that he hadn't travelled on a decently-provisioned ship where they carried eggs. The tall passenger for his part implied that, the moment he got ashore, he would have eggs or die in the attempt.

The steamer with the egg-colored funnel marched steadily in from the outer seas, and the whole coastline rose up in welcome and advancing lost its blue air of mystery. It spread out, too, and flowed over the horizon on either side. Fremantle gradually emerged and dusty foreshores and wharves became visible. Like the stranger that loses his vagueness and company manners as he develops into an acquaintance, the place of mystery became a mere seaside town full of obvious faults. But the eggs were very near now! The tall man's heart jumped as the first line was hauled dripping ashore and looped over a bollard. He moved stealthily towards the side and, when the gangway was let down, he leapt lightly on to the wharf and fled up town.

"He's getting away from the police!" screamed somebody, and there was a sort of half-hearted rush, which stopped foolishly when the supposed absconder was seen to hold up a passing policeman and gesticulate excitedly. He was asking the way to the nearest egg-shop. Presently he left the policeman and, climbing into a cab, told the driver to proceed furiously to the egg-shop address he had got from the policeman.

A very bald and serious grocer was staring thoughtfully at the world from between two cheeses when a perfect stranger fell out of a cab in front of the door and, rushing in, pointed a finger dead at the third button of his waistcoat. "Eggs!" shouted the stranger.

The bald and serious grocer put both hands on the counter and stuck out his elbows till he looked like the front section of a manthis or grasshopper. "Yes, sir! Fresh to-day, sir!"

"How many have you got?" demanded the amazing stranger.

"Er—let me see now!" He held his chin tightly. "Well, I suppose, I have about six dozen, sir."

"Mine!" shouted the stranger, striking the counter with his fist.

"What! *all* of them?"

"Put them up in a basket at once!"

"Er—can't I *send* them for you, sir?"

"No! I'll take them with me!"

The grocer wheeled and called up heavy reinforcements. Eventually three people put the eggs in a large basket. The stranger paid in gold and, fixing the grocer with his eye, asked sternly, "Now, where else do they sell eggs?"

"*More* eggs?"

"That's what I said!"

"Let's see now. Well, you might pick up a dozen or so at Smith's in the next street."

The stranger flitted from the shop to the kerb. "Smith's, in the next street," he told the cabman, and disappeared into the vehicle.

The cabman opened the slot in the roof. "Which Smith's, sir?"

"Where they sell eggs!" shouted the fare. The cab drove off and went round the corner on one wheel. Inside the tall man sat with pursed lips and his arms round six dozen eggs.

He felt like a real benefactor when, an hour later, he got back to the ship laden with nine dozen eggs. He carefully transferred himself and his precious burden ("precious burden" in the old books always meant an unconscious female) to the interior of the egg-less ship with the egg-colored funnel. He sighed gratefully when he had deposited the enormous basket on the saloon table, and was just mopping his forehead when a coffee-colored steward sidled expectantly out of the shadows.

"See this basket?" he barked.

The steward craned his neck and goggled his eyes at it. "Yes, sar."

"Full of eggs! Everybody on this ship wants eggs, and I've got them. Now," catching him by the jacket, "I want you to keep enough for me to give me three eggs a day till we reach Adelaide. That's about one dozen, see?"

"Yes, sar!"

"The rest of the eggs are to be given—divided up, you know—amongst all the other ladies and gentlemen. Understand that?"

The steward nodded excitedly. "Yes, sar! One dozen for you, sar, rest for oder ladies an' gennulmun!"

The tall passenger nodded and passed him a coin. "Right! Now you look after them for me!" He turned away and went off to his cabin to have a wash and a brush-up after his shore exertions. The basket of eggs stood proudly white on the saloon table; the retreating steward was a mere smudge in one of the alleyways.

Exactly fourteen minutes later, the buyer-of-eggs sauntered back to the saloon. He felt cool and happy, also proud. He expected to be bombarded with the thanks of any passengers who were aboard and had heard of the good deed. He looked forward with intense delight to a feast of beautiful fresh boiled eggs, and he thought he knew how grateful they would be. But, as he approached the basket and the little knot of passengers who were standing by, he became aware that the air was charged with suspicion. He glanced again at the group, and that same instant the elderly clergyman detached himself and shot out of the saloon. He not only shot out of the saloon, but aeroplaned up the companionway, flitted across the deck and clattered down the ladder to the wharf, at the imminent risk of breaking his venerable neck. The egg-philanthropist was just crossing the saloon to peer out a port after him when he noticed the travelling invalid shoot a glance of hatred at him over his shoulder. The little wife close at hand was dabbing nervously at her lips and staring expectantly at him.

A sudden idea flamed into the mind of the egg-buyer and, without thinking what he was doing, he jumped at the basket and tore off the cloth cover. One solitary egg cowered in the bottom of it!

Snatching up the final trophy, the tall man swung round and confronted the wretched steward, who had blundered in at the right moment. "Have you got *my* eggs?" he screamed.

THE DAWN OF THE MIND

Margaret Bastervelle

The steward shrank back and went a delicate shade of yellow. "No, sar! No, I ain't got youah eggs *yet!*"

The little woman uttered a scream and dropped a paper bag she had been concealing. It broke and an enormous mess of eggs sprawled on the carpet like a spread-eagled octopus.

The mad egg-buyer snatched up the basket and held it under the steward's nose. "Damn you!" he howled, "do you see any eggs *there?*"

"N-n-o, sar!"

The basket hit the floor and bounced into the corner. "Why, you damned ungrateful brute, you've stolen them all! I *gave* you eggs—gave you all the eggs you wanted, and yet you're too damned greedy to leave me a few for myself! *Blast* you and your indigestion! I hope they choke you!" The steward fell back spluttering, as the final egg burst terribly on his chin and streamed down over his white coat.

"Oh-h, sar! I 'sure you, sar, I nevah touched youah——!"

"Yes, you did, you damned ungrateful thief! You went down on your dirty hands and knees and asked me to help you to get eggs! Well, I *got* you the eggs!"

"Oh, sar, I——!"

"Shut up, you black brute! You told me you were dying of indigestion, or cold feet or something! I hope all the eggs you and your friends stole stick in your filthy throats and choke you!"

The lady who had dropped the eggs here sat on the floor and started a fit of hysterics.

"Oh, sar!" began the egg-stained steward, piteously wringing his hands.

"SHUT UP, I tell you! I'm going to leave this damned ship! I won't live amongst a lot of dirty barnyard thieves! If you dare to say another word, I'll kick you overboard!" The tall passenger turned on his heel and stormed out of the saloon.

The steward, weeping with fright, turned to the enraged and humiliated invalid whose wife was sitting and shrieking on the

egg-stained floor. "Sar, *you* know, sar, I speak truth! I ver' good man, sar! *You* know I don't steal eggs, sar!"

"SHUT UP!" roared the invalid. "SHUT UP, you black hound! *Didn't I see you come into the saloon and take every egg out of the basket!*" And then, being encouraged thereto by the innocent nigger's horror and astonishment, he kicked him violently with both feet and immediately felt much better.

Ernest O'Ferrall

Sydney.

Christian Yandell, del.

The Shadow.

By DOROTHEA MACKELLAR.

I SEE upon the hill-side
As deep in grass I lie,
A happy grove of wattles
Soft gold against the sky,
And well content am I

Between their fragrant treasure
And that cool marshy ring
Where stand the wistful ti-trees,
Wind-silvered, whispering—
As happy as a king!

Far happier, for a moment,
A gleam that does not stay—
Because of that red shadow
That's half a world away
While I make holiday.

The wattle-trees beguiled me,
They stood so peacefully
I almost had forgotten
As small sweet birds skimmed by,
That there men fight and die.

Yet it is always with us,
That thought, a spur to drive,
A two-edged knife to wound us
And stab our souls alive
That we may feel, and strive. . . . .

Dorothea Mackellar

Sydney.

"'Tis Not Enough."

By RUTH M. BEDFORD.

"'Tis not enough," has Sorrow said to me,
"To suffer, to endure, to hide thy tears;
Since thou hast bowed thy head what canst thou see?
And I would have thee look beyond the years.

Now that thy world familiar falls away,
Much I shall build, since much I must destroy,
And thou must learn to pass, from day to day,
Through ways of patience into ways of joy."

Ruth M Bedford

Sydney.

The Little Brown Woman.

By GERTRUDE HART.

THEY called her that from her first coming among them, the simple mountain folk. Whatever she had left behind her of sorrow, sin or tragedy was her own affair. Something in the steady sweetness of her eyes won their hearts long before she grew into their lives.

They fancied that there was healing in the touch of her hands, and her face with its cheery strength was a good one to look upon, if one lay tossing in fever, or sick of a mortal malady. She was all brown—skin and hair and eyes, and if she had ever been beautiful that was long past.

Just above the place where two creeks met and foamed about dark rocks her tiny home perched itself upon the mountain side. Here she lived with her crippled boy, a strange elfin child whose eyes seemed to hold the wisdom of the ages. For the rest there were no questions asked.

Humphrey— the cripple—worshipped her with all the force of his twisted nature, and spoke sometimes to his few acquaintances of wonderful stories that she told when the moon lay full upon the wooded slopes, and caught the granite boulders, turning them to silver.

She had peopled his world with beautiful objects, fairies and knights and dainty ladies; he would show you where they crossed the ford, and bid you listen to their laughter.

In her passion of devotion she resolved that nothing sordid should ever touch him—there was a great deal to make up to him.

Inside the rough house there were many artistic touches, and she grew such flowers as had never before been seen in the neighbourhood. If an animal fell sick, "Ask the little brown woman to come," they said, one and all; and everywhere faces brightened at her coming. That was the place she had won, and God knows it had gone far to heal a mortal hurt.

She became wise in bush lore as the seasons came and went. The trees flourished in the tiny orchard, and there was foam of white and pink when spring came laughing up the valley. Under the log fences that enclosed her clearing ferns clustered, the hardy sipras and maiden-hair. The beauty of the solitudes crept into her soul, the birds were her birds; and the grandeur and silence of the mountains called to her to reach and conquer.

This is the story of a day when the little brown woman grew tired; and of what came after.

The small invalid had been sick unto death, and there were nights of tireless watching and sleepless anxiety. One morning Humphrey was better, content to resign himself to the care of a kindly neighbour. Quite suddenly his mother felt that she must get away from it all for awhile.

"Take a day off," the young bush doctor suggested, after one apparently careless glance at her face. She looked at him almost despairingly, and said simply, "I must."

Then she set off down the hillside, walking rapidly with never a glance back till she reached a narrow track that wound its way round a range, thickly timbered and very rugged. She turned at this point, and it was as though something had touched an old pain to throbbing activity. She shaded her eyes with her hand, and in an instant knew that the monotony of her life was to be stirred.

All that day she wandered. If she was hungry she was scarcely conscious of the fact; only the bush seemed alive with voices. It was late afternoon when she realised that she could go no farther, that she must seek shelter. A great weariness had grown upon her, and with it the helplessness of a very young child. There were few settlers on these lonely hills, but there were some;

she had only to go to a door and say, "I am the little brown woman," and she would find welcome.

At length she reached a clearing and a house built of split logs. Like a child she went towards it, entered the open door, and sank exhausted into a chair.

For awhile she closed her eyes and lay back. It was good to rest, and the place felt like home. Then she looked about with a faint smile.

A man's room, no touch such as a woman's presence always brings even in such mountain fastnesses as these. She had wandered far indeed, for this must be the habitation of a man of whom she had heard from time to time. He had lived a solitary life for years, so the gossips said; a morose recluse who had never been known to lend a helping hand to anyone.

She looked at the confusion of books and pipes and guns. Another time she would have felt inclined to reduce the disorder. Now she was too listless.

Then of a sudden her heart began to beat in sickening throbs. It could not be fear—she had never been afraid of anything.

Someone was speaking—a man—in quick annoyed tones. He resented her intrusion, no doubt. A big loose-limbed fellow came through the doorway and so looked down upon her.

She was too tired to do anything but hold out her hands to him—as if they had never forgotten the way. There was a sharp expletive, and then one word—

"You!"

A little puzzled frown contracted her brows.

"I could not know you were here, could I, Geoff? If I had, I wouldn't have come, you know."

The man spoke roughly.

"You needn't assure me of that. You even took off your ring!"

A curious sense of happiness possessed her that he had noticed.

"Yes. You wanted to go, and I never sought to hold."

He laughed bitterly.

"You never ceased to hold. God—but I've been punished! It wasn't ever love for her, Jennie—just plain beast. Soon over, and bitterly repented of. But I thought I had tired even your great heart."

She smiled rather pitifully then, and her head found its old place on his shoulder. He had forgotten nothing, it seemed, as his rough hands touched her face and lingered.

Words had never been his strong point, and they halted now. But his touch brought magic, and the little brown woman was fast becoming a girl again. Once she put him from her, and looked into his soul. Then leant back once more.

"And the baby came," she said in low, troubled tones; "six years old now, Geoff—and a cripple. Our fault, you know—for I fretted, though I tried not to. Such a little twisted body."

That was all she said. She had never been one to ask questions; life had taught her so much wisdom. By and by she would realise the strangeness of the fact that they had been living their lives all these years with only the hills between. Now she was tired out, and she was being rested.

She whispered something to him once, and he took the plain gold ring that had lain against her heart, and very reverently placed it upon her finger. Sleep—the dreamless sleep of utter exhaustion was fast coming upon her; but he was sure she smiled.

Gertrude Hart.

Geelong.

PARBURY'S BOND,
MILLER'S POINT, SYDNEY.

Sydney. Ure Smith.

A Hard Doer.

By E. J. BRADY.

HE rode down to my camp at sunrise, by previous arrangement, and we turned our horses' heads south'ard for a week's cattle hunting and sporting in that unknown country which lies between the Snowy River and the Victorian border.

The Hard Doer rode ahead. He wore a faded crepe band around his seedy felt hat. He might have been in mourning for somebody dead, or the band might have been habit; but it was plain that either the funeral or the fancy dated back a long time. Cossack boots, old leather gaiters, a blue shirt, and grey tweed trousers completed his dress. Inside one of the gaiters was sewn a sheath to carry a knife. The blade had been much worn by constant sharpening, but its wavy edge was keen.

Across his seat the Hard Doer had a cornsack slung for a pack, with the weight of its contents neatly balanced on each side of the horse. Blanket and hobbles were buckled on before him. A black billy, which had originally been a golden-"surrup" tin, rattled from the "dee" on the off-side.

The Hard Doer was anything over 30—lean, sallow, and weatherbeaten. He had a long nose, with a slight lean to it; high cheek-bones, and straight black hair. The skin of his neck was corrugated, and the palms of his hands hard and raspy with corns. Altogether he looked as if he had been left out in the sun and rain when he was very young, and the people who put him out had forgotten to take him in again.

It was a sunlit, beautiful day. We rode with sparkling sea on one hand and leafy forest on the other. Sometimes the bridle-

track lay close to the edge of the shore, and one could see the waves breaking on the rocks and rolling back in clear cascades from slippery cliffs. At other times we entered a belt of timber, and the shadows of the tall trees enveloped us in a cathedral gloom. Again, we cantered along a healthy plain or across the hard sands of some golden beach, where the gulls rose up with harsh complaints when we neared them.

The Hard Doer burned strong black tobacco in an ancient pipe.

When he wakened in the morning he looked round for this pipe, knocked the ashes out, refilled and relit it. Thereafter throughout the day, except at meal times and other short intervals, his black teeth were constantly clenched on the stem. He was a great smoker and a poor talker. We might have ridden seven or eight miles when he made his first remark.

"Shod 'orse." Which, with an inclination of the head towards the track, meant that a shod horse had travelled over it recently.

About twelve miles out we came to a saltwater inlet running up into the hills. Clumped tea-tree fringed its banks, and with rushes and tall sword-grass, made dense thickets along the margins. The Hard Doer cocked his eye at the sun, and said over his shoulder—

"Time to bile the billy."

So we dismounted, and he took the syrup tin into the thicket, and filled it with brown, brackish water, such as one gets in these coastal soaks. We spread our packs out on the grass and opened them. The Hard Doer's pack was a perfect model of neatness. The man who lives and travels by himself in the bush generally acquires a military habit. He folds his blanket without a crease, puts up his tent as if for review, and proceeds like a soldier on the march. His sugar-bag was made of bed-ticking, one sign of a true bushman; he had butter in a little earthenware pot, with a damp rag carefully tied over the top of it; his own scones, enough

for a week, were rolled in a flour-bag; everything, even his bit of household soap, had its own separate bag and place in the pack, and the things came out in order, were put down in regularity, and put back after each meal, according to system—the system of balancing a pack and saving weight and space.

The Hard Doer rarely initiated a conversation, and his replies were framed with no waste of words. He did not throw away speech, or anything else.

We rode on quietly during the afternoon, great calm and restfulness around us. At one tidal creek, shallow water was running clearly over seaward sands. The Hard Doer paused by the hitherward edge, and looked up and down with cautious eye. Then he got off, handed me his reins to hold, while he undid his boot-laces and tucked up his trouser legs. As he felt out a safe passage with a pole, I plunged through the quicksands after him.

The horses went down over their knees in the treacherous sand; plunged, strained, and finally floundered out by dint of great effort.

While this excitement lasted the Hard Doer delivered himself of short, crisp swear words, framed, I thought, with a view to economic concentration of expression. They crystallised my own ideas, anyhow; I would have had to take a much more roundabout track through my vocabulary to reach the same result.

We got along to our camping-ground in the mystic hour between dusk and dark, selected a clump of honeysuckle on a tussocky point overlooking the sea, and relieved the tired horses of packs and saddles. As I swept the ground clear of rubbish and pitched the tent, my mate groped about in the gloaming, with his sheath-knife, and cut a good supply of long, dry grass. He spread this out in the tent for a bed, laid the blankets methodically on top of it, and put the saddles at our heads for pillows.

It was now dark, and we had to economise our candles. The Hard Doer piled up dry firewood by the fire, which he threw on by instalments as the blaze lessened, so that we found the way to our

mouths. Our tablecloth was a cornsack laid on the ground. We had cold boiled bacon, black billy tea, and bread, for sustenance. For dessert and sundries we filled our pipes. As the good tobacco smoke curled up the Hard Doer laid back on his elbow, grunted, and remarked:—

"This is what I call comfort."

"Some city people might think it tough," I ventured.

He spat contemptuously towards the fire. "I'd like," he said, "to take some of 'em where it *was* tough. Like to see 'em in a snowstorm on Monaro—they'd die."

I agreed with him.

The moon, in its first quarter, went down beyond the trees; the little sea breeze died out, and the mosquitoes began to put in their fine work. The Hard Doer brought cow-dung into the tent, tore up the grass with his hands, and made a clear place for it.

Then he "rose a smoke" which filled the six by eight to suffocation.

He was awake, according to habit, at the white of dawn, and went out to find that one of the horses had broken a hobble strap, and made back in the night. He swore in carefully-selected phrases during breakfast time, resaddled, and started on the trail after the roguish delinquent.

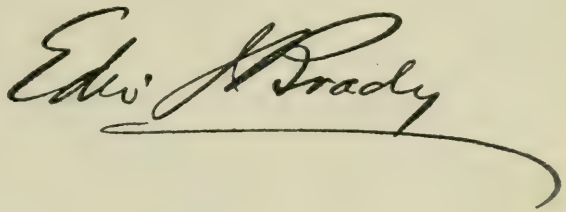
It was afternoon when he returned to camp, after a ride of 40 miles, driving the animal before him with his stockwhip.

"Found him at the rails," he observed. "Where did you put my pannikin?"

With this the incident closed.

I spent a week in the bush with the Hard Doer, an instructive week. The only occasion on which his impenetrability presented an opening was when he shook a lively four-foot tiger snake out of his blanket. He sprang into the air with a yell; while I rushed for my shotgun and a cartridge. After I had bagged the reptile he stood looking at the wriggling remains in a rather shamefaced attitude.

He turned the "tiger" over with his foot and said,
"How the —— did he get there?"
It was the only occasion on which I heard the Hard Doer express curiosity about anything.



Mallacoota, Vic.

To Beatrice.

By LOUIS LAVATER.

Dearest! While this dull body worms its way
From dark to dark, through darkness, how my soul
For ever would pursue a separate goal
With faintings, flutterings, doubtings yea or nay!
What rosy ardours, what wan droopings grey
Beset it; in what dismal night of dole
Would it transcend its boundaries, paying toll,
To win with thee unto the wide blue day!
Hear me, heart's-core of all things loveliest!

This is my prayer, as I do now attest
By faithful word in this fair-drawn indenture:—
I pray thy spirit compass me about
Like a blue nooning, shadowless of doubt,
When fares my soul upon its last adventure.

Melbourne.

Quatrains.

By ARTHUR A. D. BAYLDON.

A SEASCAPE.

Blue heaving surge with wild waves here and there
That scale the rugged ramparts of the shore
In running leaps that lift their long white hair,
And then burst blindly with half-smothered roar.

A THUNDERSTORM.

The cavernous-throated Thunder shakes his mane,
Blackening the bright Sahara of the skies;
Stampeding at the flashes of his eyes
Rattles and roars the myriad-footed rain.

WATTLES.

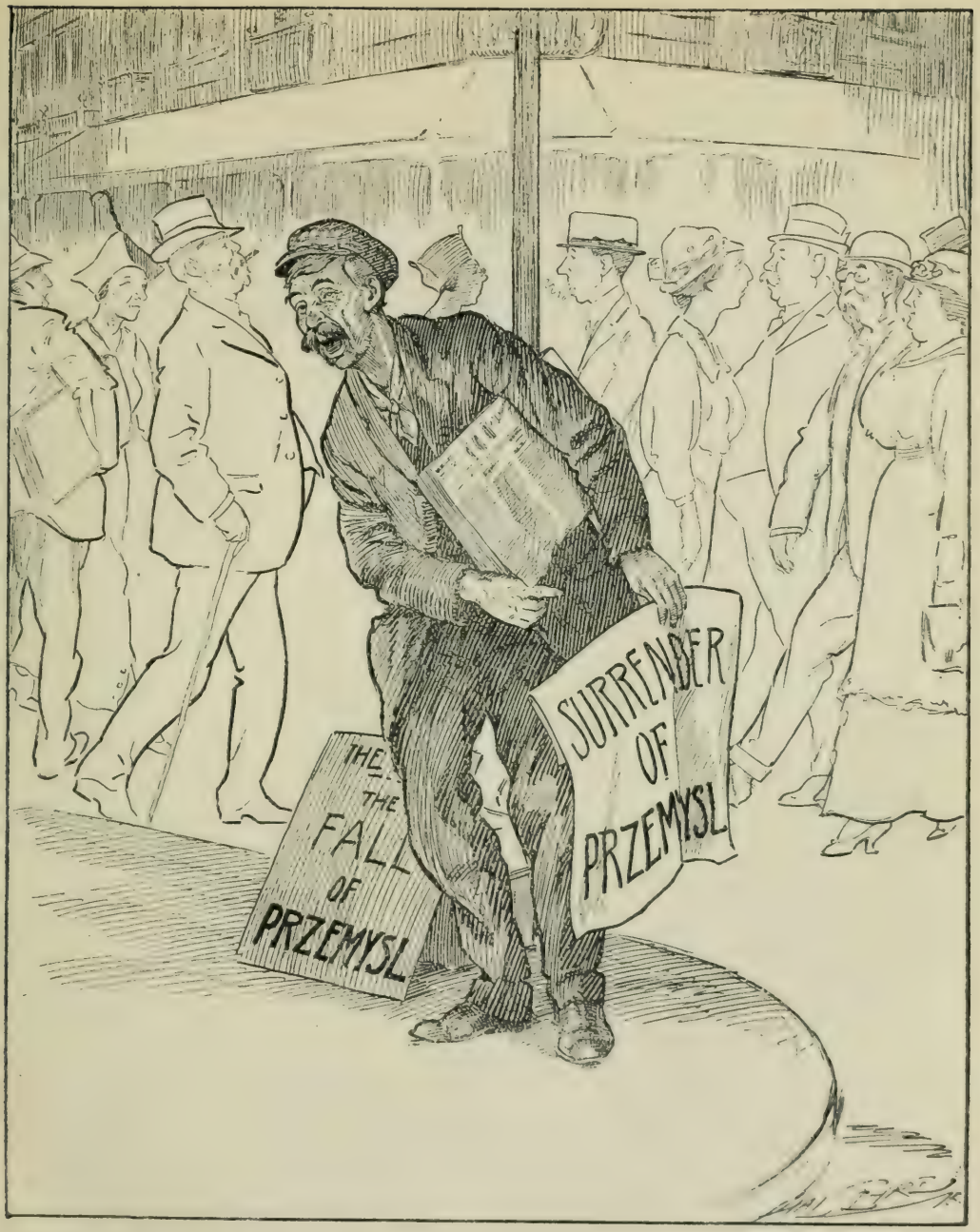
Wattles afire
With yellow torches scent the air,
As though a choir
Of angels had been resting there.

THINK NOT.

Think not when thou hast sinned a secret sin
Thou canst outwit the sleepless judge within;
Or that thy thoughts are wasted, vital still
They bias other souls for good or ill.

Arthur Bayldon

Sydney.



THE HORRORS OF WAR.

"Here y'are! Full account of the Fall of—Ptz!—this 'ere place."

Hal Eyre

Autumn Nocturne.

By LOUIS ESSON.

AUTUMN is on the hills,
Autumn, and Peace, and Night,—
And thro' the forest spills
A half-moon's misty light.
Gone are the golden farms
With sunset's burning bars;
The trees, with rocking arms
Are filled with sleepy stars.
Who wanders by the creek
Lured by the night's caress,
Finds all men ever cross the world to seek,
Dreams, or forgetfulness.

* * * * *

The cottage lamp is lit—
Across the window here
The sapling shadows flit,
And cow-bells tinkle near. . .
London has motley shows
That crowd each narrow lane;
And Paris, books in rows
On quays along the Seine.
But when with vague desire
Some thoughts abroad may turn,
A night-bird cries "Mopoke!" and on our fire
We watch the gum-logs burn.

Louis Esson

Melbourne.

IN THE SHADE OF THE CASUARINA.

A Memory.

By DOROTHY FRANCES McCRAE (Mrs. C. E. Perry).

HE plunged into the gully—deep into its musk and green coolness. The laughing water leaped over the stones, singing to the mosses on the tall tree-ferns—so tall,—so scented—through dim green vistas, where at every turn he suspected a naiad.

Above the ferns—the gums—up, and up, and up. A heaven of blue. . . . He paused to listen. Water splashing, stirring leaves—the crack of the whip-bird. Another crack, crack, crack! A volley of thunder, and the groan of another forest giant—and, above all, a girl's voice, singing. Such a voice! (as he parted the boughs) such a face! She sat on a log that spanned the water. Hands clasped—beauty born of murmuring sound in her face:

> The night has a thousand eyes,
> The day but one;
> But the light of the whole world dies
> With the setting sun.

He caught his foot on a projecting root and stumbled. The girl did not turn her head, but ceased singing, and appeared to listen.

"I startled you," he volunteered.

" 'Tis an awkward path."

"But I've spoilt your song."

"I'd only begun."

"Thanks be!"

She was not conventional. Emboldened by her excuses, he limped down the bank. Leaning on his crutches he felt his way carefully along the log. She remained motionless, and he sat beside her.

"May I sit here and smoke? And will you finish the song for me?"

"Yes, if it will please you."

He wished she would lift her head, and show her eyes.

He was accustomed to the stare that riveted his shortened limb. The averted gaze spelt pity. The morbid creature writhed, conjecturing that she had already seen him through the fern. Scaring a frog with his crutch, he queried:

"You come here often?"

She did not look up. Had she, perhaps he had lost the pensive grace of her neck and those drooping lashes. What a study she would make! If one could paint that little head of hers —*not* on a background of pale gold, but of green—cool, haunting, inspiring green!

"Often—just as you do."

"I?"

"I hear you pass. You passed the gully yesterday—at dusk."

"Did you see me?"

"No; I heard you. You paused and struck a match on the big gum that blocks the track."

He whistled.

"Witch, nymph, dryad—what are you? What forest-sharp ears!"

"A mortal sitting at the feet of the Bush, to catch its song."

"Give me the words. Tell me; I listen!"

"That's what I do—listen! Did you pause to hear the whip-bird and the music of the creek. It babbles on and on—morning, noon, and night. On, and on, and on." Her voice rippled like the running water. With a flowing rush she continued: "Don't

you love it, too? The soft whisper of the mosses, the flapping bark, the rustle of rotting fern (it smells so sweet!) the slip! slip! of the little lizards, the dead leaves rustling."

He prodded with his crutch.

"Your turn! What do you see? Tell me?"

"I see a world of green," he droned. "A world of light and shade. Of sunlit fern, of crystal stream. The stepping stones gleam a rusty gold in the shallows. The sky, a fainting blue."

He paused.

"I see a dryad dreaming on a log—white-robed—wonderful. I see her head, her face, her soft elf-locks. Look! See how you quiver in your whiteness. You seem to shrink aloof from me. From me—the parody of a man—the picture out of drawing."

His eyes sought her face. It was pale, with trembling lips. On the curved lashes a tear.

"Don't!" he implored. "Not pity—that unmans me. I—I—hate pity. I never drivelled before. Even as a child, not to my mother."

He laid his crutch beside its companion on the log.

"Witch!" he exclaimed whimsically, "What spell have you women—what charm to bind me? . . . those tears! But the world is full of us; the halt, the lame and the blind——

"Tell me," he burst out; "could you (so perfect) love anything not physically perfect? Answer, Dryad?"

He could scarcely distinguish her "Yes!" above the splashing of the water. Yet she said, "Yes."

"God love you! Do you think you could learn in time (don't call me mad) *in time*—to care for me?"

The rustling fern almost drowned her whisper. But her lips said, "Yes."

"And"—he caught his breath—"you haven't looked at me yet!"

Then she raised her head and turned her face to his. Beautiful as morning, passionate as night. What lips, what hair—*what eyes!*

Wide, blue, deeply-fringed—but—unseeing: What depths of pathos!

"Good God!—you are—"

"Blind!"

She pronounced the brutal word calmly, he shuddering as though in an ague. This dryad, this beauty he purposed immortalising with his brush. Blind! He, with his repulsion for anything physically imperfect, linked to a blind mate.

The water babbled on and on; on and on. The sun pierced the boughs and lit the shining avenues of living green. The whip-bird rang his note. The lizards slipped through the fern. Shade lay deep on the distant hills; but silence lay like a stone between the two.

At last the girl spoke.

"Give me your face."

She touched each feature lightly, caressingly, letting her fingers linger in his hair.

Then she let them fall, whispering, "Good-bye!"

"*Good-bye!*"

"Oh!" she moaned. "I cannot see. But—your voice, when you said '*Blind.*' Go!" she sobbed fiercely. "Can you not see? It would be mad. Impossible, not only for us, but for others. The halt and the blind! It is a dream—a midsummer madness."

The finality in her voice smote him—and yet—

"I dreamed a dream"—her voice took a cadence of deepest yearning—"a dream of fuller woman's life. Of curly heads—of cradle songs—of sudden love—ah, *Go!*"

He picked up his crutches.

"Let us—be friends!"

"You are—a memory!" she answered. He stumbled along the log and up the bank. There he paused, looking on the picture that should render his name famous—hereafter.

A WILD GARDEN

Ellis Rowan

A rippling stream with boulders of rusty gold. A background of magic green. The white-robed dryad of the woods, with eyes bent on the water, gazing, gazing—

She heard him pause. Her voice floated up to him, finishing the interrupted song:

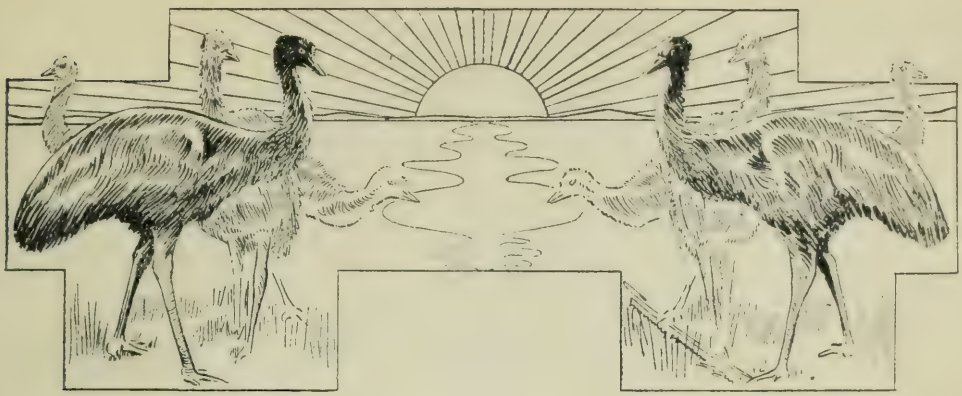
The mind has a thousand eyes,
  The heart but one;
But the light of a whole life dies
  When love is done.

Dowling J Parry.

Melbourne.

Distinction.

MRS. O'ROURKE: "Yes, that's wot happens to a man wot marries for social position; thinks himself somebody coz his missus washes for the Grand Hotel."



The Greater Need.

By D. EGERTON JONES.

I TURNED the key very quietly in the lock, I didn't want Nell or Jack to know I had done it: it seems so sentimental and early-Victorian to lock yourself in your room to cry over your trousseau, and anyway I'm not going to cry. I just mean to have a last little good-bye look at it, but I don't want any of the family bursting in on me in the unceremonious way they have; they never think of knocking. For if I did happen not to be able to help just one or two trickles, they might think I was unpatriotic and a coward and grudged Bob to England.

As if I ever would. Why, I'm proud he's going; I'm glad, I tell you, GLAD! only—you see we were to be married this month, and——perhaps I oughtn't to cry even by myself, but I never let Bob guess and that's something, isn't it?

Why, of course, I'm glad he's going, I don't see how any girl could help it, and yet some of them actually try to stop the men they care for. How can they be so selfish and disloyal? I couldn't have urged Bob to fight if he hadn't wanted to. I'm not

heroic enough for that, but I wouldn't have held him back for anything in the world. And yet this afternoon Perle Harden admitted to us all that Dick wanted to go and she wouldn't let him; she'd begged him not to.

"I can't help it, Cecily," she pleaded, when I went for her. "There are plenty of other men to go and Dick's all I've got. I couldn't live without him. I just can't let him go."

"Other girls are sending all they've got," I said, in a kind of white rage; "why should you save your happiness over the dead bodies of ours?"

For that's what it amounts to, doesn't it? Every woman who stops her lover or her son going is saving him at the expense of some other woman, for almost every man that goes leaves a hole in some heart.

All she's got and she couldn't live without him! Why, isn't Bob all I've got, too, and oh! to think of life without him now! But that's God's affair, not mine. And when he told me he wanted to go, that Mother England needed men and he thought his first duty was to her even before me, and would I mind very much? thank God, I never hesitated a second. I put my arms round his neck and said, "Mind! Why, I'm proud to give you to her. But —Bob—I—I want you back."

And I *am* proud, only sometimes at night when I try to picture a battlefield after the storm of shrapnel and bullets, and think of the torn and huddled things on the ground—and one of them may be my Bob!—but I never tell those thoughts to him; he must always remember me proud. But oh, Bob darling, darling, I love you so, and we were going to be so happy.

Isn't love queer? Why one person should be so much more to you than the rest of the world. I love just everything about Bob, his hair and the funny little way his eyebrows kink up, and even his dear old prickly face when he wants a shave. And to think just a stray bullet or a bit of shell and "the Secretary of War regrets"—and year in and year out there will be me just the same, nothing will happen to me—

THE OLD GEORGE ST. MARKETS,
SYDNEY

Lionel Lindsay

Death's queer, isn't it? I don't mean for those who die, but for the rest of us. It seems now as if Bob couldn't go out of my life like that—but I daresay all women who love feel the same, and some of them can't return.

He's coming to-night to say good-bye. They leave to-morrow and in a minute I must change my dress, but somehow I felt before I said good-bye to him I wanted to say good-bye to all my pretties, all the things I'd gathered together to make myself and the house that's a-building beautiful for him. Perhaps I *am* early-Victorian, but——

I'll take my house things first. They do look so cosy, all folded up in neat little piles. There's all my kitchen towels, plain gray ones for the crockery, and the glass ones with their natty red checks, and even dusters, too. And how cool and lovely the linen sheets feel. I was going to keep them so white. I love nice linen.

I hemstitched the tablecloths myself. I couldn't bear to let the shops do it: and just beneath are my damask face-towels. I crocheted the lace for nearly all of them. And here's a traycloth Nell worked for me the first week Bob and I got engaged. Oh, wasn't it a happy week. I knew Bob was going to ask me and yet somehow when he did—it was all different and heavenlier than I'd thought it could be. Hush, Cecily, you mustn't start thinking back like that, you just get on and say good-bye to the traycloths; here's a dozen and a half d'oyleys all waiting to have a last little pat. Such pets some of them are too. I can just see how they'd look with the cake and biscuits nestling in them on my days at home—putting on lots of frill! Oh, you dears, go away quick or—no, I'm not crying really, but I might if I looked at you any longer.

And here's the cushions that were going to make our study so cosy. Bob loves cushions, he's an old Turk, he just loves to have his head on one, his feet on another and a third poking him somewhere in the back. They're brown for the study and here

are two pink ones that were for my room. I love pink. And the house is nearly finished, too. I saw it yesterday as we drove past. We shall have to let it now, I suppose: it will spoil it to stand empty, but how I hate the thought of anyone else in our house. We've planned it so carefully, and fought over it with the architect and argued and dreamed of it together till it seems a bit of Bob and me, that they will be spoiling.

Ah, well, maybe I'd better turn to my own things now—the dear lacy piles, and, I can't help it, I must kiss my breakfast caps; they are such darlings. Bob is certain I couldn't ever look prettier than I do, but I used to say wait till he saw me in a breakfast cap with a little pink rosette over one ear and rosebuds over the other,

and he would say—there, away you go, with a kiss inside each of you from me instead of the ones Bob would have given you.

These in this softest tissue are my wedding set. I hadn't ordered my frock yet, but all my under-things are ready even to my shoes and stockings. Yes, you are lovely, dear wedding clothes, even if I shall never wear you now. God! will it be never—I wonder——

. . . . . .

Jack came just now and rattled the handle of my door. He called out that Bob is coming up the path. I have put them on, my wedding things, the shoes and stockings and the rest. But I have only an ordinary frock on top and they will never guess, not even Bob, that underneath I am a bride. Perhaps it is silly, but —well, you see I want to. I guess I haven't any other reason.

There, lid, down you go and round goes the key. I can hear Bob's voice in the passage. Am I all right, mirror? I wonder will he notice my shoes, he generally does, and they are so dainty, but I shall not tell him they are my wedding ones. He mightn't understand. He might think I'm regretting already——

He's going to-morrow and I want him, oh I *want* him, but— I guess England wants him more, so— "Coming, Bob."

D. Egerton Jones

Adelaide.

The Promise.

By MARIE E. J. PITT.

"A thousand years shall be a single day."
—Thus spake the Book to men
In that wild dawning when
Men warred and wearied of the ways of war—
And they took heart again, and looked afar
With haggard eyes for peace no man may ken.
A thousand years shall be a single day
Beneath the sky where God has set his bow.

Within the shrine the kneeling priest is slain,
O'er Europe's bloodied snow
The wild war-bugles blow
The hollow dirge of twice a thousand years;
Hate's white-hot altars hiss with blood and tears,
Love's fires are cold, and Faith's clear lamp burns low—
Haply o'erleans thy ruined roofs, Louvain,
The patient sky where God has set his bow.

Marie E J Pitt

Melbourne.

Mons.

By O. C. CABOT (Edward Newton MacCulloch).

ALL the world was summer-gay
When we went to Mons;
All the air was sweet with hay
When we went to Mons·
Past the cornfields, orchards, farms,
Gardens rich with glowing charms,
Forward marched the British arms
When we went to Mons.

How the girls and women smiled
On the road to Mons!
"Brav' Anglais!" lisped every child
As we went to Mons;
Flowers flung they at our feet;
Wine they gave, and dainties sweet,
Swallowed amid dust and heat
When we went to Mons.

Little recked we of the price
When we went to Mons;
Yet we were the Sacrifice
Offered up at Mons!
Feasted, beamed on, decked with flowers—
Blessed by Beauty from her bowers—
Jesting through the sunlit hours—
So we went to Mons!

Far ahead we heard the guns
Booming beyond Mons—
Heard the fast-approaching Huns
Closing upon Mons!
Secret—swift—without delay
We were mustered in array
On the quiet Sabbath day
Dawning over Mons.

Soon there fell the thunder-stroke,
Crashing over Mons!
All the storm of battle broke
On our heads at Mons!
Oh, for matchless tongue, or pen,
That could tell the story when
Fifty thousand soldier-men
Saved the world at Mons!

Never on this earth before
Was a fight like Mons!
Like a tidal-wave, the war
Swirled round us at Mons!
God in Heaven—but their guns!
But the myriads of Huns
Sweeping over Britain's sons
On that day at Mons!

Five, and six—Ay! eight to one
Were the foe at Mons!
But they could not make us run
From the fight at Mons.
Though o'erwhelmed on front and flank—
Battered—blasted—rank on rank,
Not a soldier blenched or shrank
In that Hell at Mons!

Slowly back—and back—we fell
From the town of Mons;
Never soldiers fought so well
As we fought at Mons.
Many a humble hero bled—
Many a gallant soul was sped,
But the foemen learned to dread
Those they met at Mons!

O'er the champaign fair and wide
Round the walls of Mons
In a vast, resistless tide
Poured the foe on Mons—
Horse and foot and countless guns—
Plane that flies and car that runs—
Death in armour led the Huns
On that day at Mons!

Fighting—marching—fainting—still,
Still we stood at Mons!
Every brook and every hill
Took its toll at Mons!
Many a charge the foemen made,
But we met them, unafraid,
Gun to gun and blade to blade,
Falling back from Mons!

Day and night—day and night,
Miles away from Mons,
Still we baulked that brutal Might
Loosed on us at Mons.
Gasping—staggering—sleepless—spent;
Fain for aid that was not sent,
Slowly back—and back—we went,
Falling back from Mons!

England's name—we knew it well
When we went to Mons—
England's fame was ours to sell,
Falling back from Mons;
But—thank God!—no soldier there,
Rank or file, but did his share:
Future ages shall declare
How they died at Mons!

Oh, if Glory be no cheat
Let it shine round Mons!
There magnificent defeat
Saved the world at Mons—
There the Lion stood at bay,
Holding back the hordes in grey,
Night and day—night and day—
Falling back,
Slowly back—
Falling back from Mons!

"O. C. Talbot."

Katoomba.

THE FISHMARKET TOWER,
MELBOURNE

John Shirlow

Jonathan.

By MARION MILLER KNOWLES.

JONATHAN MORRIS, J.P., sat on his back verandah, smoking,—a scowl on his brow, and his shirt sleeves rolled up.

He was in a bad humour, and the soothing weed he smoked had not had time to take effect.

Two tramps he had turned away supperless the previous evening had, in revenge, set fire to three of his largest haystacks after the household had gone to rest for the night; and, as misfortunes rarely come singly, he had been obliged that morning to shoot a favourite mare which had broken her leg.

A cockatoo was strutting up and down on a perch beside Jonathan, its crest raised, and its knowing eyes watching him, as if it scented the coming of a storm.

From inside, came the sound of scrubbing, sometimes broken by a girl's voice singing snatches of old songs.

The singing, though it seemed part of the bright, sunny morning, evidently jarred on Jonathan.

"Nell!" he yelled.

"Nell!" shrieked the cockatoo, flapping its wings.

"Yes, father!"

The owner of the pleasant voice appeared in the doorway—a pretty, but scared-looking girl of twenty-one.

Jonathan pointed with his pipe to a figure in the distance.

"That young man who fools after you, is riding across the paddocks. There's plenty work for you inside, my girl, so keep

hard at it! I've got somethin' to say to that there young man, which I'm goin' to git off my chest right away!"

"Oh, father!"

"Get inside, young woman! Your father wasn't born yesterday! No daughter o' mine will stand foolin' round like a motherless calf in *my* house. You can do what you like when you go to his'n!"

He broke into a loud, coarse laugh, which the bird echoed—swaying backwards and forwards in ludicrous imitation of his master's corpulent form.

Nell, white to the lips, retired—out of sight, maybe, but not out of sound of hearing. Her father had never favoured Ted Anderson's suit, but, so far, he had refrained from openly insulting him.

The rider by this time was close to the house, whistling gaily, "I'm Off to Philadelphia in the Morning!"

Jonathan's thin lips set in harder lines. He watched Anderson grimly as he cantered up to the gates, went round to the yard, and tied up the horse.

"H'm! it's a wonder he didn't turn his skinny old moke into my stable, an' feed him on my oats! Aint worth more than £5, that horse—an' dear at that! You have your p'ints, Mr. Edward Anderson, but you know no more o' horse-flesh than a suckin' calf! I can't abide these dapper city fellows, with their polished ways. I'll let him know what Jonathan Morris, J.P., thinks of him before he's an hour older!"

"Well, young man," drawled Jonathan, in a strong nasal tone, as Ted made his appearance and bade him a hearty good morning, "an' what may you be wantin', this fine day?"

"Oh, I just thought I'd ride across to see how you were getting on, and how the wheat was looking."

He leaned against the verandah post, a good-natured smile on his face—his dark eyes wandering the while to the dining-room, at which he thought he had caught a glimpse of his sweetheart's face.

Jonathan folded his hairy arms across his chest, screwed up his lips derisively, and gave a harsh laugh.

"No, you didn't come to see how I was adoin', not you!—nor to see how the wheat was gettin' on, Mr. Fair-and-easy! You came down here to see my daughter, young man! Howsomever, she's got something more to do of a morn than waste her time talkin' to young men. Just you sit down again on the bench, Mr. High-an'-mighty. What's good enough for Jonathan Morris, J.P., is good enough for you, I suppose? Old Jonathan may be as rough as they make 'em, but, for all that, he's thought more of in this here district than some folk that hold their heads higher, with a dashed sight less in their pockets! Some there be who'd like to make a cat's paw of the daughter's hand to reach the old man's cash-box—eh, Poll?"

He made a facetious dive at the cockatoo with his pipe.

" 'E don't know where 'e are!" cried the bird, putting its head on one side, and sidling out of his reach.

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Jonathan, "the cockatoo is right. ' 'E don't know where 'e are' who goes adoin' that!"

"Mr. Morris!" cried Anderson, springing to his feet; "are these insinuations meant for me? Do you dare to——"

"Call 'em what you like, Mr. Edward Anderson, as long as you answer me this here question fair an' straight—do you want my daughter or my money-bags?"

Neither man noticed the flutter of skirts at the dining-room door.

Anderson's face had grown bloodless. Even hardened old Jonathan quailed before his blazing eyes and the torrent of wrath which poured itself out in a lava of indignant words:

"Jonathan Morris, insult after insult have I borne at your hands for the sake of your daughter, but now the time has arrived when to sit quietly and listen to your coarse taunts would be but a cad's part. I want none of your money-bags! I would scorn to touch a farthing belonging to you! I would not change with the mean, petty soul in your body for all the gold in Australia.

I want to marry your daughter, it is true, but I am able and willing to work for her—ay, and I have worked for her these three years past—and I defy any man in this district, or out of it, to throw a stone at me as far as character is concerned. You can keep your greasy money-bags, Mr. Jonathan Morris, and much joy may they bring you!—but, believe me, if your daughter loves me as I love her, neither you nor all the fathers in the Commonwealth will manage to keep her from me!"

A figure appeared for an instant on the threshold of the dining-room, then drew hastily back again.

Jonathan gazed at the irate personality before him with a peculiar gleam in his small, shrewd eyes.

"We're oft pestered with foxes o' nights, when honest folk's abed—are you a protector of the varmint?"

"Sir, your age protects you! I shall not come as a thief in the night, to run away with your daughter! Never fear—I shall not cross your threshold again. Nell is of age; she must choose between us. It is true that I came to see her only. You forbid me to do so, for no reason whatever—save the paltry one of my being a much poorer man than yourself. I wish you good-day."

Anderson strode off the verandah, his broad shoulders thrown back proudly. Stalwart, honest, and capable he looked. A man of reason might have been proud of such a prospective son-in-law.

Ted was half across the yard, when there was the rush of a flying, gray-clad figure over it, and a cry of "O, Ted, Ted!"

Before Anderson had time to turn round, Nell Morris, weeping bitterly, was beside him.

Jonathan was following her leisurely. Nell gripped her lover's arm, and faced her father determinedly.

"I choose now, father!—now—now!"

Jonathan put his pipe between his lips, and began to light it slowly.

"CAUGHT!"

Tom Shield

"Your choice aint a bad 'un, either, young woman! You'd better ask your young man in to dinner. I don't bear no enmity. He has his p'ints; he *(puff! puff!)* has—his—p'ints!"

Melbourne.

Marion Miller Knowles

Sonnet.

By J. LE GAY BRERETON.

LOST in the bush, I have dizzily strayed alone
Till the grim night has crept upon me, cursed
With heat and sagging weariness and thirst;
Then my astonished feet and eyes have known
Strange yet familiar glade and log and stone,
And, in a wink, the wilderness, reversed,
Reveals the quaint illusion I have nursed,
And the black, watching, hovering fears are flown.

So now my spirit triumphs and I see
The star that lights and ever lit our way
Though all the reek of hell whirl blindingly.
Nought can forbid us to be proud and free;
Our heart-beats drum us to the eternal fray
Where Love proclaims defeat and victory.

Sydney.

J. Le Gay Brereton

AFTER THE DANCE.

HE: "Let me see, was it you I kissed in the conservatory?"

SHE: "About what time?"

David Low

Sunset Land.

By R. J. CASSIDY.

HERE, west from Sydney's laughter; here, west from Sydney's woe,
Lies Sunset Land, the Mecca of Down and Out and Co.,
Where Abdul steers his camels for ever to and fro.

Where Piker's pub.'s a landmark; where Piker sits and spins
A web of weird allurement wherein the fantod grins—
Where he who leaves the cities does penance for his sins.

Where Piker's girls of gladness, to pamper and to please
The vagabond and "cheque-man," transmute the ivory keys
To scenes of other places and strange old memories.

(O! swish of silks and satins behind a far-off door
That some of us shall open with glad entree no more!
O! tiny shoes weave-weaving waltz patterns on the floor!)

Where reckless young Merino looks long in Laurel's eyes—
A pleasant little custom, but ever most unwise;
For glad are Laurel's welcomes—but oh! the sad good-byes!

Where Blueblood and the spieler swop troubles side by side;
Where meet the frauds and failures—denied and undenied;
For Piker's pub. is ever the privacy of pride.

Where curious crowds assemble, of ev'ry caste and creed,
What time old Piker's scheming provision for his need;
Where Faith has turned to ashes, and Folly run to seed!

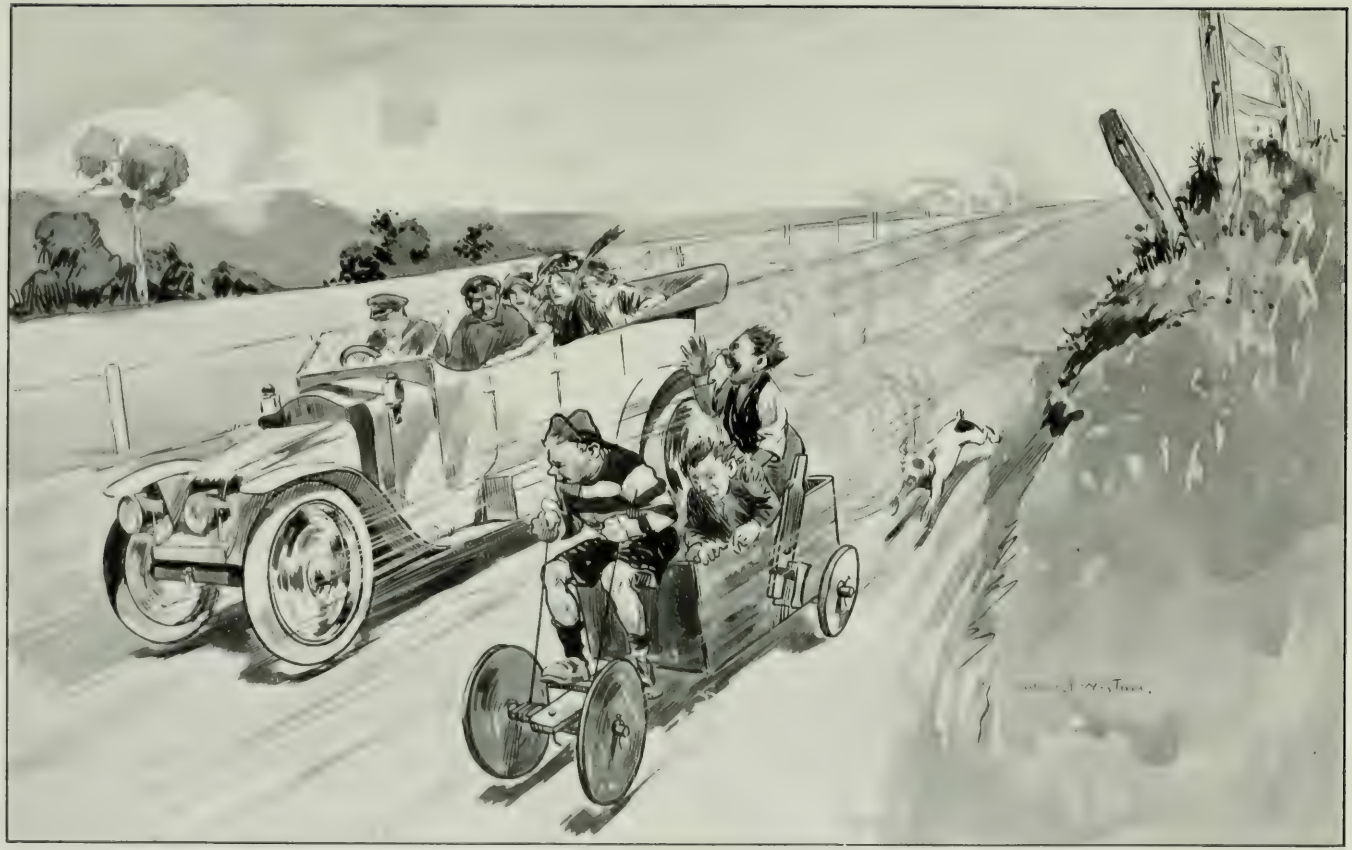
Oh! land of sun and silence. Oh! land of scrub and sand.
Oh! land where pathless distance creeps out on ev'ry hand—
How shall we guess your secrets? How shall we understand?

Hark! thro' the night star-silvered, beneath a ghostly sky,
Come voices from the stillness—half question, half reply—
And the Afghan camel-driver with his "hunchies" passes by.

Oh! people hemmed in cities by Custom's bolt and bar,
What know ye of My Country, and its blazing Gipsy star?—
Where Laurel's lips burn scarlet, and her jilted lovers are!

R. J. Cassidy.

Sydney.



THE ROAD-HOGS

The Mothers.

Dramatic Sketch for Two Characters.

By ARTHUR H. ADAMS.

SCENE: MRS. CHESTER'S *drawing-room, pretty, middle-class. Window up C. Telephone on Table, C. Several photographs of a young man on the wall and about the room. Afternoon.*

MRS. CHESTER, *middle-aged, dressed in deep mourning, is gazing out the window. She turns, with a weary gesture, comes down, picks up a photograph in frame, of the young man, and puts it down with a suppressed sob*: Dead! Killed in the trenches. My son!

Enter MRS. MORDAUNT *(in calling dress, same age.)*

MRS. M. *(swims up to* MRS. CHESTER, *takes her two hands silently in hers)*: Oh, my poor dear! How dreadful!

MRS. C.: Yes, it's true. I got a cable two days ago.

MRS. M.: I only saw it in to-day's paper. Killed in action! Your only son! Poor Jack! My boy was dreadfully cut up when he saw it this morning. *(Inquisitively)*: But the paper didn't give any details. I thought that you—

MRS. C.: There are no details. There never are. Just three grim words, "Killed in action."

MRS. M.: Then you don't know how he died?

MRS. C.: Bravely, I know. And that is all I know.

MRS. M.: But was he shot, or—?

MRS. C. *(shudders)*: Bayonetted, or smashed to pieces by a shell? I don't know. I hope I shall never know.

MRS. M. *(disappointed)*: Oh! You'd think the General would at least have the politeness to tell you, his mother. But your boy! To be taken like that!

MRS. C.: He died fighting for his country, and his country needed him. What finer death could he have wanted?

MRS. M.: I see. You're right, Alice. If one has to die, Jack was lucky in having such a glorious death.

MRS. C.: I never thought of glory. And I'm sure Jack never did.

MRS. M.: That makes it all the finer. But I'm more than ever glad, after this, that *my* boy didn't volunteer. My only son!

MRS. C.: So was poor Jack.

MRS. M.: Of course. But that makes it all the more awful that you could allow him to go.

MRS. C.: Should I have stopped him?

MRS. M.: I stopped my son.

MRS. C.: Though you knew every man was wanted at the front?

MRS. M.: Well, there were plenty of others who should have gone before Cecil. But I had a dreadful time stopping him. He was mad to enlist; said it was his duty to enlist. I told him that his duty lay at home, with his mother. There are plenty of large families of boys where one or two wouldn't really be missed. But I have only one.

MRS. C.: So had I, and now I have none.

MRS. M.: Don't tell me that you couldn't have prevented him going.

MRS. C.: How could I? *(Breaking down.)* No; I can't keep it up any longer. Oh, Julia, he's dead now; nothing will ever bring him back now. I don't know even if he was buried, nor where he died. I shall never know even where he was buried, never see his grave. Nothing to remember him by, except memories. And there is one memory too bitter to bear. I must tell you, Julia. I must tell someone. Else I'll go mad. *(Pauses.)* Jack didn't want to enlist. I made him.

MRS. M.: You, his mother!

MRS. C.: Yes, because I was his mother.

MRS. M.: You sent him to his death! Alice!

MRS. C.: No; not to his death. Death is everywhere. Death took his only sister when she was only a tiny baby. But in a time like this what use is life? What right has any man to his own life when his country demands it? Why, all it is worth is to be thrown away; my boy's great body was meant only to stop a bullet so that our men could go on over his body to victory. That is what we women bear and bring up our children for. All the long years of care and worry—just for that! Oh, yes, the thought of death was behind all my pleadings with him, but could I be a coward, too? If my life was of any use to stem that grey tide of brutality that is sweeping over us, don't you know I would willingly give it? But they don't want women's lives: they only want their sons, they only want their hearts. If it meant Jack's life or mine, do you think I would have hesitated? But they only wanted him. So I gave him. I sent him to his death.

MRS. M.: God forgive you, Alice.

MRS. C.: God forgive me, yes! That night he came home so unexpectedly from the camp, and told me he had just two hours to spend with me before he said good-bye! The transports were going out at dawn. I said good-bye to him without a tear, because I could not let him see that I was a coward. But I cried all that night. And I got up before the day broke, and went down to Cremorne Point to watch the transports go. It was raining. There was just a tiny group of us, a sad little group, with umbrellas, watching in the grey rain. Mothers, sisters, wives, sweethearts! We were too far off even to recognise our own boys in the crowd on the decks and in the rigging. And so we watched the transports go, silently, sombrely, without a cheer. Off to the front—and sneaking out like that into the grey curtain of the rain! But we waved, and a thousand arms waved back to us; and then we cheered—a feeble little women's cheer, from throats that were worn out with sobbing—such a pitiable cheer!

But they cheered back, a great, rousing cheer—our big sons! Our great brave boys! But no, we didn't see them like that. A mother couldn't. No; they were just our little tiny toddling sons, our little baby sons, lying in their little white cots, lying warm in the bed beside us, our little helpless bits of new life! Our babies!

MRS. M.: And you could send him away!

MRS. C.: Of course it hurt, dreadfully, in the long nights after he had gone. But I was proud, too. I had given my boy for his country, and surely God knows how hard that is for a mother! And after the weeks of weary waiting the days when his letters came! The little crisp letters, saying so little, telling me so much! I've got them here. So few! You know he didn't want to go till I persuaded him. Well, in his last letter he says *(picking up a letter from the little pile on the table).* No; I needn't read it: I know it by heart. "Mumsie"—silly baby! he always called me that. "Mumsie, I'm so glad now that you made me go. You've given me my chance to prove I'm a man. You showed me the way, Mumsie. I can't imagine now how ever I could have hung back. Fancy you having to persuade me to go! Mumsie darling, there's a lot of brave fellows on board, but none so brave as you. And, because you believe in me, remember always, Mumsie, I'll never disgrace you." That's all, except something about the socks I made for him. He says there never were such socks.

MRS. M.: Oh, Cecil is brave enough, too. He was frightfully eager to go. Why, when I forbade him, he actually went off and enlisted. But he was under age, so I saw the officer and refused my consent. And they had to give him back to me. And now that I've got him safe, they'll never get him again. I'm thankful that I saved him from—

MRS. C.: From death, yes.

MRS. M.: I'm glad you see that, Alice. I'm glad you know what you have done. I always thought you were a hard woman, a prideful woman.

MRS. C.: Me! Oh, not now!

MRS. M.: No; because God has punished you for your pre-

sumption. He has taken your son from you because you did not cherish him enough, because you sent him from you to this dreadful war. I see in this the Hand of God. He gave us our sons to keep from harm—not to send them to their death. But, of course, I can't expect you to see how presumptuous you've been.

MRS. C.: Oh, but I do see it—now that he is dead.

MRS. M.: Perhaps that is why he was taken—to punish you. Oh, Alice, that is how I hope you will look on this awful thing. As a lesson against presumption.

MRS. C.: Yes, Jack is dead. I sent him to his death—just that—his death. His terrible, lonely death. I try to keep it up—to pretend that I'm proud; but I can't, Julia, I can't. I see now I've been wrong—and nothing I can do will ever set it right. I shouldn't have let Jack go. I shouldn't have made him go. And now he's dead, in the trenches . . . somewhere out there . . . . in some trivial forgotten fight . . . dead . . . the living happiness that was my great boy . . . dead. And I can't keep up my pride any longer. I killed him. I forced him to go. I'm Jack's murderer.

MRS. M.: I'm glad that you see it now. I've always thought you were too proud.

MRS. C.: Oh, Julia, don't say that. Surely I'm humble enough now—a childless woman who murdered her baby! *(Telephone rings.)* Oh! *(She goes to it.)* Yes. This is Mrs. Chester's house; Mrs. Chester speaking. . . . Yes, Mrs. Mordaunt is here now. You want to speak to her? *(To* MRS. MORDAUNT*)*: Julia, it's someone who wants you. . . . No; they don't want you. It's just a message, I think. I'll take it. . . . Yes? . . . Oh? . . . No! No! . . . *(To* MRS. MORDAUNT*)*: Wait: I don't understand. *(To telephone)*: Tell me again! . . . Bringing him home? . . . You're ringing from Mrs. Mordaunt's house? He's there now. Wait. I'll tell her. *(To* MRS. MORDAUNT*)*: Julia, there's been an accident. A dreadful accident. It's Cecil, your boy Cecil. They've brought him to your house. They want you to go home at once.

MRS. M.: Cecil! An accident! Is he hurt?

MRS. C.: Yes, in an accident. *(To telephone)*: Hullo! Tell me—is—he—is he—? . . . *(drops telephone)*. He's killed. Dead. Run over by a motor car. Dead.

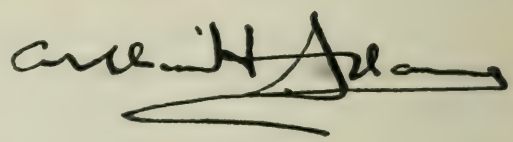
MRS. M. *(drops into a chair)*: Oh, my boy! Cecil! No; it can't be. There's some mistake. Why, Cecil's at the cricket match. He went off so happily this afternoon. He couldn't be dead so soon.

MRS. C.: Go, go at once. It might be your only chance. I'll come with you. *(Tries to assist her to her feet.)* I know what it is to have a son killed.

MRS. M. *(sitting dazed)*: Dead! Dead so quickly, so easily! No, no! Death couldn't come to Cecil like that.

MRS. C.: Death is everywhere. *(Ecstatically.)* Your son run over by a motor car going to a cricket match! My son, killed in action for his country! And you kept your boy at home for that! And I sent mine to the front. I sent him! Thank God I sent him!

CURTAIN.



NOTE.—*The Dramatic Rights of this sketch are reserved by the author, Arthur H. Adams, "Marama," Cremorne Road, Cremorne Point, Sydney. No fees will be charged if the production is for a patriotic war purpose.*

Resurgam.

By GEORGE GORDON McCRAE.

I CLOSE my eyes, and back again,
In England, past the foaming main,
And all the isles between;
Seek out once more, nor yet in vain,
The spot where a dear form had lain
These years on years unseen.

Low lies the stone in turfy bed,
Upon it autumn-leaves are shed,
While whispering grasses wave
Beside it here and o'er her head,
Here, but we cannot deem her dead;
She's slumb'ring in her cave.

I sweep the yellowing leaves aside,
And, lo! in letters they would hide
One single word I read
Here, on the marble wan and wide
Carven long-since, they yet abide
For passing eyes to heed.

What firm, what trusting Faith is here,
What vision rapt more crystal-clear
Of Heav'nly joys in store?
All sorrow past, and dried each tear,
She knows the time is drawing near
She sees the Golden Shore.

It stands in letters black and tall,
One word, "RESURGAM," . . . that is all,
One word of Faith and Joy,
Life's foes may totter to their fall
'Mid battle-smoke and hate and gall,
Here's Hope without alloy.

And, musing thus, I idly dream'd
Of days well-nigh, and then it seem'd
As o'er a sea of wrong,
Brave Belgium . . like a sun that beam'd
Whilst from her helm new glories streamed,
Rose to a paean song.

George Gordon McCrae.

Melbourne.

FOLLY

Esther Paterson

The Cubs.

By WILLIAM H. ELSUM.

'Twas a call came ringing eastward; 'twas a cry passed whisp'ring west;
North and south the Mother pleading for her bravest and her best:
"Bring me back the love I bore ye in your years of splendid youth
When my brows were lit with Morning, and my days a psalm of Truth.

"Now the hand of War is knocking, knocking at my island gate,
And above a red horizon peer the awful eyes of Fate:
Eyes of menace and of meaning, lit with baleful fires of hell—
This the prayer I send ye, children, from my ancient citadel."

Lo! a mighty answer sounding from the eastward to the west
As ten million voices chorus one reply to her behest:
"They who fight yon old grey Mother reckon not with her alone—
They shall fight a Greater Britain: flesh of flesh, and bone of bone!"

Lo! they come in endless cohorts: come with faces all alight
With the glory of the god-like, strong to save, and fierce to fight;

Greatly daring, sacrificing, singing mighty songs that spell
"We have traversed all the oceans, and you're fighting us as well!"

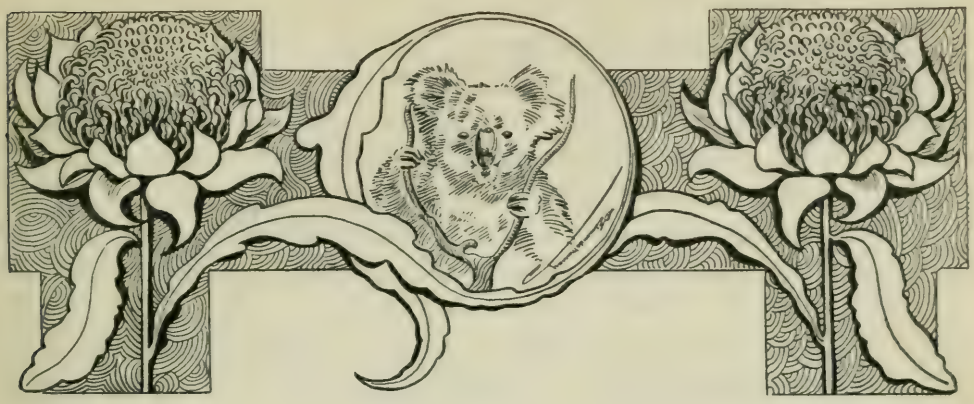
Dusky hosts from Ind's fair cities—from the cradle of the race;
Sun-kist youths from far Australia—slack of limb, and square of face;
Sons of Africa the splendid—friends where erst were mortal foes;
And the straight-browed, clean-limbed children of Our Lady of the Snows.

So they come in vast armadas—fleet on fleet—and led before
By the grim grey Shapes of horror, primed in panoply of War:
Till the gods stand lost in wonder at the whispered words thro' Space:
"Thine to call and ours to answer—best and bravest of the Race!"

"Would ye fight the old grey Mother?—ye must fight her children too;
We have tasted of her sweetness, we shall share her bitter rue.
Come the Universe against her—if she stand—or if she fall—
She shall have her children 'round her: One in One, and All in All."

Wm. H. Edsume

Melbourne.



Michael Cragan's Great Adventure.

By EDWARD DYSON.

"I donno if we've not shtept out iv the fryin'-pan into the soup, Norah, me gir-rl," said the widower, Michael James Cragan, very dolefully, on the third day of his great adventure.

"Why will yeh admit it at all?" asked his daughter impatiently. "I'm afther tellin' yeh times out iv mind 'tis nadeful to be triumphant 'n gay wid the people iv the great cities. Wanst they think yeh beat, man, never a wan iv them but will take a shtick to yeh. Have sense, will yeh no'? The one what confesses he's beat is always beaten."

Cragan's right hand rummaged under his hat, and he grinned lugubriously. " 'Tis very well an' all what yer sayin', me gir-rl," he said, "would brave talk make good eatin', but here I am three days, 'n' never a job offerin' wan way or the other, 'n' the rint 'cumulatin' manewhile, 'n' me few thriflin' shillin's dwindlin' out, 'n' five shmall childther waitin' to shtarve on me." Cragan pushed his hat to another angle, and continued the exploration

with his left hand. His thick, reddish hair yielded no inspiration. "I donno, I donno," he said hopelessly.

"Well, well, Michael Cragan," said stout Norah, "there's no one dead yet, nor dyin' nayther, for the bite or the sup. Ate a little 'n' thry again."

"Ain't I afther thryin' agin' 'n' agin, 'n' wanst more, 'n' findin' niver a wan nadin' a tall man can swing a pick, put up post 'n' rail finces, build a well, fell threes, plough, quarry, 'r wash a prospect wid any livin'. Begor, Norah, they're all arnin' meat 'n' dthrink here sitting up on a shlim shtool wid a pen to their fisht, makin' great calculations, a thing no Cragan was good at iver, sinst the days iv Noah." Michael had his two talons in his hair now.

Norah wound a plump arm about his neck. "Tut, tut, 'tis early yet. Yill do well enough, but 'tis not cunnin' t' talk iv well-sinkin' 'n' ploughin', 'n' fellin' down terrible threes here in Melbourne. Would they be irrectin' post-'n'-rail finces 'long Collins Shtreet, d'yeh think? Would yeh have them dig a roarin' gold mine befure the Posht Offis, 'n' shtart a two-horse puddler on the fut-path right forninst the Town Hall dure?"

" 'Tis a minin' man I am, me darlin', 'n' a fine digger be taste 'n' inclination, 'n' me almost bor-rn wid a prospectin' dish to me fist."

" 'N' great good it done you, year in 'n' year out, messin' in the sludgy cricks, 'n' diggin' yer poor, silly goold mines on the flats, 'n' searchin' 'n' searchin' ever be the dar-rk hills 'n' findin' nothin' would kape a shoe to the fut 'r a fair heft iv praties in the bag."

Cragan sighed. "I'd not have left it in twinty year did yeh not drag me off, me jool," he said. "Though 'tis true I did shmall good be it fer mesilf 'r them loved me. Hersilf had the har-rd life wid me, rest her soul."

"There, there, be consoled, will yeh? Me mother was contint wid yeh, Michael Cragan, if her divil iv a dauther was not." Norah took off her father's hat, and tried to smooth his rebellious

hair. " 'Twould be as profitable to attempt to pat a bed of sofy springs into decent seeming," she commented.

But Michael was not to be reassured with the laying on of hands. He had regarded the adventurous excursion from his native hills to the city with dire misgivings, and experience was justifying his blackest forebodings. He could get no work in Melbourne. There seemed to be no field here for his peculiar talents, and nowhere in sight was there a bit of a "crick" where, in dire extremity, a man could fossick for a few grains of gold to provide immediate necessities.

Never before had Michael James Cragan been quite out of touch with "the bit of fossickin'." Always there had been a morsel of "wash" or a few yards of "slurry" with golden potentialities which Michael, senior, with the able assistance of Michael, junior, could put through the cradle or the sluice box, with the certainty of panning out a reasonable meal.

Here in town one was cut off from all sources of supply. Here was no field of "praties" a man might levy on in a case of emergency, here were no stray lambkins frisking on the hills of which a man might take surreptitious toll when the "mate hunger" was strong upon him. His native wilds in the auriferous heart of Bungaree had never withheld succor, and through it all was the vivifying hope of the gambler, the old digger's chance of hitting it rich, of coming on another "jeweller's shop" in the sparse alluvial of Gravel Flat, or cutting a two-ounce reef in the neighbouring hills, already considerably scarred with his neat trenches.

From this simple, hopeful, half-vagrant life Norah's insane ambitions, Norah's absurd craving for respectable order, and fixed meals, and the felicity of a regular fifty shillings a week, had torn him. From the ever-sustaining possibility of a successful flirtation with Fortune, he had allowed his daughter to inveigle him to this suburban wilderness of asphalt and macadam infested with a curious sort of little fat men—slaves of the gamp—and

inflicting him with the dire emotions of a poor, shipwrecked sailor cast upon a barren island.

Another week went by, and still Michael Cragan was hunting the elusive job. Ere this Norah had been taught by experience that it was not wise to take the first sum offered by Moses Cohen at the sign of the Three Gilded Pills in Smith Street on articles of domestic use. She had learned, after several ventures, that Moses Cohen, as the proprietor of a pawnshop, really desired to take things in pawn, and was not merely conducting the business because it hurt his pride and irritated his family, as she at first imagined. Realising this great truth, Miss Cragan was now able to negotiate for the full value of such security as wedding rings, parlor ornaments, and kitchen ware.

But the hope that had flowered in roseate blossom in the soul of Miss Cragan when the family came to town was now faded, and the bloom hung desponding heads on limp stalks. At the same time, too, the roses were paling from her cheeks, and the little devil of gaiety no longer played peck-a-boo in the pretty dimple situated half-an-inch from the left hand corner of Norah's handsome mouth. It was from sad contemplation of these things that Michael fled into his backyard on that memorable Saturday morning.

Michael raked his prospector's kit out of the woodhouse, spread the articles on the grass, and stood over them, rubbing up the hair under his hat in pathetic perplexity.

"I dunno!" said Michael Cragan. "I dunno! I dunno at all, no I don't."

Norah came from the kitchen door, and stood beside him. She understood the struggle that was going on. The prospector's pick, the handy short shovel, and the neat pan had accompanied Mike on many a hopeful excursion. He clung to them as a link with the life he loved. While they remained it seemed to him there was always a chance of striking it rich one day. As much as a man may love inanimate things Cragan loved his "tools of trade."

Norah tugged at his elbow. "Don't ye do it, Mike," she said.

"An' for why not?" Michael rounded on his daughter almost fiercely. "What would a sinsible man be doin' wid the like here where yiv shtuck him t' paw himself all day long like a poor bit iv a beetle unther a glass?"

Norah hugged his arm. "Sure 'n' didn't I mane iv'rythin' for the best? 'N' ain't I sore throubled wid thinkin' day 'n' night?"

Cragan saw the tear on Norah's cheek, and hugged her black head convulsively. "I'm an ondacent, ill-mannerly divil, I am that, t' be barkin' at yeh, me poor gir-rl, 'n' you the on'y wan in the house worth annythin' at all," he said, and a large, opalescent tear hung foolishly from his own nose. " 'Tis not raysonable keepin' them poor things. Lave me pawn them wid Cohen, 'n' there'll be Sunday's dinner maybe."

"Yill do nothin' iv the like, Mike Cragan," said Norah decisively. "Lave them be till Monday. Well enough we'll do manewhile, I'm thinkin'. 'Tis certain yill get a job Monday, man. If no', I'll be seekin' afther somethin' meself, 'n' Mickie will be sellin' the papers. Why not? We'll not be dyin' onnecessarily if I know it, mind yeh."

Cragan looked fondly at her. "Yer the shwate, thrue gir-rl, y'are, Norah, wid the big, han'some mouth t' yeh, a fine, tall husban', rich ez the kings in Connaught, should be fillin' wid kisses."

"Go on away wid yer poethry, 'n' be diggin' me a high wide hole in the yar-rd there," said Norah. " 'Twill do t' bury the rubbish, makes me eyes tired wid the dishorder iv it."

Cragan turned readily. "Thrue for yeh," he said, "a hole would be a fine thing t' bury it by. I'll be diggin' it immejit 'n' quick. A finer hole ye never did see."

Norah knew perfectly well that she could recommend nothing better for Michael's despondency. He set to work with a juvenile delight, selected a site for the hole, and put down a neat, three-by-two prospecting shaft with the exactitude of a craftsman.

He had sunk hundreds of such holes on his prospecting tours at Binalong, all mathematically correct, plumb straight, and as neat as band boxes. This one went down quickly. The loam was soft, and under it he found a strata of sand littered with shells, sea fossils, and scraps of wood. Mike's cottage was within a quarter of a mile of the bay, and these things did not surprise him.

Cragan dug cheerfully. He forgot his troubles at the work his heart was in, and presently broke into a lilting Irish song. Suddenly work and song ceased. The pick was suspended in air, and the refrain died on his lips. One moment's silence, then a "Whooroo!" subdued by an inspiration of caution, bubbled from the digger. He hurled the pick aside, and sank on his knees in the pole, pawing in the sand like an excited monkey.

Half a minute later Michael Cragan appeared in the kitchen, his eyes rounded with wonder, his stiff hair electrical with emotion, his accustomed reddish face almost grey.

"What would yeh be makin' iv that, Norah Cragan," he squealed, pounding a small object on the table.

Three little Cragans gathered round, eager-eyed. "Out iv it!" cried Michael. He seized two youngsters, and butted the third before him. "Away wid yeh, 'n' play yer games," he said. Slamming the door after them, he returned to Norah. "Well, well," he said. "Have ye a doubt iv it?"

"It's gold!" said Norah.

"Goold? Av course it's goold—good, shweet, clane, beautiful goold. 'N' that, 'n' that, 'n' that, 'n' a hape more if I'm not terribly mishtook."

"But where?" gasped Norah, now as tremulous and pale as her father. "How? Is it the devil's doin', 'r what?"

"Never a know I know, but it's dug frim the ground this very blessed min-ute, 'n' in the unlikeliest-lookin' dirt ever I set me two eyes on. Come wid me, Norah. 'Tis dishthractin', all this goold, 'n' me head's forsook me, I'm thinkin'. Kape the childther off it. Niver a sowl must know, me gir-rl."

Norah drove the children into the street on some vain errand, and joined her father at the golden hole. He had all the symptoms of a man mildly demented.

"Look, me gir-rl, look!" he gasped. "Is it thrue at all? Am I dhramin', is it? Hit me a skelp wid the shovel, 'n' wake me, won't yeh? I'm sthruck mad, 'r daft, 'r what? Will yeh look again, Norah, dar-rlin'? Tell me is it all thrue. Is me eyes not disavin' me? Shout, will yeh, woman! Is it all there? Goold is ut—good goold, is ut?"

Cragan stood up to his elbows in the shaft, and on the ground before him where Norah knelt was a pile of yellow, shining pieces.

"Gold it is!" said Norah. She looked about her uneasily. "What's happened to us all at all, Michael Cragan?" she whispered.

"How would a poor man be knowin'?" Cragan replied. "I've dug it from the sand, and ivry shtroke I give there's more. 'Tis sacret we must be, Norah, sacret 'n' cunnin', me dear. Did annyone know, they'd take it from us, I dunno."

All that Saturday Cragan pawed and burrowed in the sand, filling a small leather bag with the gold, and many times Norah made excursions to Michael's bedroom depositing the treasure in an old Wellington boot under the bed.

They desisted at nightfall. " 'Twill niver do t' be wor-rkin' be candle," said Michael. "The neighbors would be mighty curious, 'n' who knows maybe I'll be wantin' t' buy thim properties adjacent wan iv them fine days."

"Yes, yes," said Norah. She was overstrained and nervous, her eyes were full of a sort of fear, and her hands were tremulous. So much wealth, and to come so suddenly. It terrified her like a great disaster.

"Fortunit it is,' said Cragan, "the finces is high 'n' close, 'n' never a man can see us. Though I misdoubt they'd know did they see. Poor, silly, thriflin' fools they are all here where minin' do be consarned. Shtill sacret we'll be, Norah, 'n' cunnin'

wid it. In the mornin' I'll get to wor-rk to build a thriflin' small shed over the shaft. 'Twill be fer the keepin' iv hens do annyone seem curious 'n' consarned."

On Monday Michael completed the run-'em-up shed over his shaft, hustling a neighboring sawmill for a load of scrap timber, and working with a terrific energy he sought in vain to disguise.

Inside that shed, hidden from prying eyes—if it occurred to any of the neighbors to pry—Cragan worked. At first he washed the sand from the hole in his tin dish, and panned off his prospects as carefully as if he had been after "paint" gold on an old field. Later he resorted to a sieve with a suitable mesh as quicker and more convenient. The pieces of gold were of uniform size, and none escaped Michael's keen eye and expert paws.

Cragan saw himself growing rich with startling speed, and by means that seemed miraculous. He was working the first profitable gold mine in Melbourne, and in some instances a bucket of his "wash" outdid anything recorded of the Black Hill, Ballarat, in the roaring 'fifties.

"T' think iv it, Norah," Michael would whisper at night (he had no time for whispering by day), " 'n' me afther workin', 'n' toilin', 'n' diggin' all me days on the fields, 'n' gettin' nothin' but a few thriflin' grains, 'n' look now." He dug his hands into a bucket of it, and let the gold rain through his fingers.

"Most marv'lous it is," commented Norah. "But will yeh shtop yer foolishnesses, man? If someone peeked 'tis t' gaol yid go, never a fear."

" 'N' for what? Fer diggin' me own goold from me own sile, is it?"

"I dunno at all, Michael, but I'm thremulous. I'm afeared iv so much gold."

Michael Cragan had pounded many of his pieces into shapeless lumps, and had sold them here and there. The gold brought £3 15s. an ounce. These were the days when a man might sell gold without provoking the curiosity of hired officials. Cragan had paid a deposit on the cottage, and it was now practically his

own. Slowly and insidiously, and very carefully, he was undermining the property, taking out all the sea sand, sifting every disc of gold from it, and stowing the sand back tight and trim in the parts already worked out.

Cragan was a good miner; especially in shallow alluvial. He knew every trick and turn, and this wonderful little mine in his backyard was being worked with marvellous precision and neatness, and no scrap of evidence of it appeared outside the building over his shaft, and very little inside, for there was no need of windlass and rope, and Cragan kept his shaft covered with slabs. In the building were two heaps of sand and a sieve. No neighbor of Mike's, seeing them, would have dreamed of anything beyond simple building operations.

Under the ground at his smart, well-timbered face, Cragan worked industriously, and all his work was profitable. He followed the "run" of gold as a sleuth hound might follow the scent. It worked wonderfully like a gutter in an ordinary "lead." One day he came upon a "pocket" which yielded over a thousand pounds worth of gold. Here, too, he found splintered wood and rusted hoop-iron, a clue, perhaps, to the origin of his wonderful alluvial deposit had Michael been seeking clues.

Cragan did not buy the adjoining properties. He found that the golden dirt petered out in every direction before he reached the dividing fences. The full richness of it was in his own yard, and in two months' time he had cleaned up every ounce of it.

"We're not ez rich ez them Rothschildther, 'r them Rockyfellers, me gir-rl, but 'tis rich enough we are to go on wid, 'n' the lark is, never a divil suspicts it, but me 'n' you bechune us."

" 'N' how much would it be all told?" asked Norah.

"Whisper, me gir-rl. 'Tis six thousand, nine hunthred, 'n' fifty-foive pounds!"

"Lor-rd have mercy!" gasped Norah. " 'Tis a sinful lot iv money."

" 'N' from where did it come ever?" said Cragan. " 'Tis that is fillin' me wid wontherment. Is there anny more hereabout? I'm askin' meself ever. Sure, I can't shleep fer askin'."

But eventually enlightenment came, and Cragan slept again, convinced he was wasting no opportunities. Knowledge was proffered unsolicited by big Tim Kelly, an oldest inhabitant of those parts, a roaring great Irishman whose acquaintance Mike had made soon after the working out of his mine.

"Don't I remember the time when all this was nothin' but a shwamp," said Kelly spreading his arms to indicate the surroundings. " 'Twas filled up by the Government. They put a mighty great pump down in the sea beyant 'n', shquirted millyins iv tons iv silt 'n' rubbish out iv the bay, 'n' filled up the low counthry ez yid fill a pie, so they did."

"My land, too?" asked Cragan.

"To be sure, man. Your land is about the centre of it. Years before that I was shtill an ould 'n' respected resident iv the dishthrict. Right back afore the robbin' iv the 'The White Knight' I was here, payin' me rates honorable."

"The White Knight is it?" said Cragan nervously curious.

"That was the ship carryin' the goold t' England. The Morgan gang got at her 'n' sthripped her sthronghold. Twenty-one thousand pounds in sov'reigns they tuk. But 'twas told et the time, 'n' ginerally believed, wan box iv seven thousand was let fall in the bay. Many a party thried with divers t' recover it, but 'twas never seen again, supposin' the thaves lost it at all."

Standing at a large crucible in his shed that evening, sweating over the melting down of a ladle of sovereigns dated 1854, Cragan's musings found vent in involuntary speech.

"I'm wontherin'," he said, "where's the bla'guard got a holt iv that other fourty-foive sovereigns iv mine."

Edward Dyson

Melbourne.

The Three Sons of Boudrys.

(From Merrimee after Mickiewicz).

By T. W. HENEY.

LORD of Lithuanian acres in the marches of the North
Boudrys, the old chieftain, to his courtyard hastened forth,
For the tidings had been brought him that the world was all at war,
And the instinct of the fighter ease and age like ribands tore.
He had summoned sons and vassals as of old to hear his will,
Each to his own task, for so belongeth to a Ban and Father still.

"Let the boar-spear and steel arrows for the quiv'ring sides of deer
Lie neglected with the wolf-knife; calling dogs no longer hear;
Get you horses that can bear you wheresoe'er your way shall lie;
Let your arms be those of warriors who either slay or die.
North goes Olgerd 'gainst the Russians with all men that call him lord,
Say you are the son of Boudrys and the wielder of his sword.

In that land of craven traders there are spoils the taking worth,
Very rich and far more plenteous than the niggard fruits of earth.
Let your booty be the furs that make a summer in men's veins,
What time all the fiends of winter hold as theirs our snowy plains;
Bring you silken robes embroidered in the cunning Eastern kind
Flashing like the soul of jewels rays that would the gazer blind.

"You go west against the Teutons with the host whom Keystut leads;
Let them tell me the cross-bearers fell like autumn-withered weeds.*
When thy conquering chief menaces all their land with sword and fire
And the burghers of its cities, lest their houses be their pyre,
Fill your tents with hoarded riches, be thy choice upon that day
Gold, gold of sea-washed amber and the rubies' bloody ray.

"Go, my last son, with Skirgello over Niemen's rushing stream,
Thence to bring me silks or jewels your light fancy may not dream.
Very small is Poland's treasure for her spoiler when she yields:
Noble weapons—mighty lances and impenetrable shields.

* The Teutonic Knights.

Bring a wife from war-worn Poland, for no land can boast so well
That her maids in love and honor, as in beauty, far excel.
Half an age agone to Poland I went warring and thence led
Home again a captive wife, but I not she was vanquishéd;
For she made these halls more happy than e'er war did make my tent.
Long hath she departed leaving me more lover since she went."

Soon they passed from out the courtyard, autumn went and winter came;
Endless seemed the days to Boudrys lonely, yearning for their fame.
One calm day the snow was falling, but within the maze afar
Boudrys saw a horseman coming, it was he from Olgerd's war.
And the burden that the bourka covered close and hid as well*
It is treasure of Novgorod, Boudrys said; the vestment fell.
Nor he doubted as he went to welcome back his son from war is mine,
Not for all the Russian riches my fair bride would I resign."

Then another horseman slowly rode across the frozen plain
Boudrys knew his son returning from stout Keystut's far campaign.

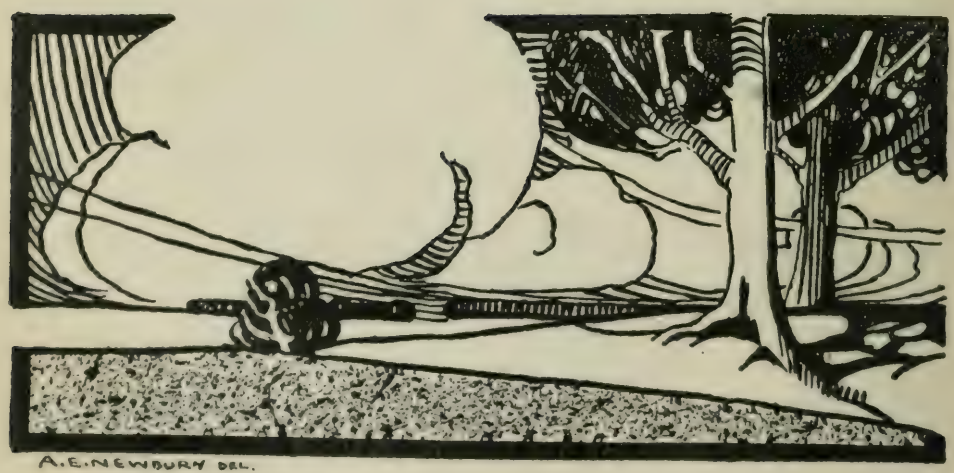
* The bourka is a horseman's felt cloak.

Nor he doubted as he went to welcome back his son from war
It was priestly gems and amber with such carefulness he bore.
But his hope was rudely broken when the bourka fell and there
Stood a Polish maiden blushing, wild and timid, but most fair.

When his servants told the old knight his last son was drawing near,
"Let them furnish forth the marriage," said he; "I will see the maiden here."

J. W. Heney

Sydney.



"Will I write and say if I'll do a drawing for the Belgian Fund before the 12th?"
DO IT NOW
I'll write now! The drawing isn't wanted before the 12th
DO IT NOW
"Great idea this little reminder!"
DO IT NOW
"Lots of time yet not near the 12th"
"Aw shut up you know they dont want it till the 12th"
DO IT NOW
DO IT NOW
We'll do such a bosker drawing for those Poor Belgians - before the 12th
GREAT SCOTT THE 12TH WAS YESTERDAY

The Keeping of the Door.

By ARCHIBALD T. STRONG.

[Catherine Douglas, when the life of her King, James I. of Scotland, was sought by traitors, thrust her arm through the empty staples of the boltless door, and kept it for a while, till the bone snapt. For this deed she is known to history as Kate Barlass.]

THERE was no way but this. No bar was found
To hold the door against the ruffians' hate,
The empty staples mocked the king with fate,
The women's cry in clashing steel was drowned.
Sudden a maiden leapt from those around
And thrust her arm across the iron grate—
She held them, till beneath the shattering weight
The brave bone snapt. She swooned upon the ground.

Thus, Belgium, when hell's traitors rushed the door
Lusting to give the world to spoil and flame,
And wreak their hate on all the true and free,
Thy brave arm held them, yet no rescue came.
—'Tis shattered, and thou liest wounded sore
That we may live. What shall we do for thee?

Archibald T. Strong

Melbourne.

A Fairy without Wings.

A Story for Children.

By ANNIE R. RENTOUL.

WHEN Bunny-Boy's father and mother gave him a name, all the Good Fairies came to the christening. All the Good Fairies came, but there was one Bad Fairy too. It is so with every baby boy and girl at a christening.

Of course there were some other people at the christening. There was the clergyman, who gave Bunny-Boy God's blessing, and dear Grannie, who brought him a silver mug, and cook, who baked him a white frosted cake with no candles on it at all. But the Fairies all had gifts as well. Each of the Good Fairies gave him a good gift, but the Bad Fairy gave him an evil gift. For it is always so, when a baby gets its name.

The last of the Good Fairies kissed Bunny-Boy one kiss on each bold black eye, and gave him the power of seeing the Fairies. Then she flew away through the window on her wings of sunlight.

"It is going to rain!" cried dear Grannie, as the Bad Fairy stooped over Bunny-Boy, who crowed in his mother's arms.

The Bad Fairy blew blind-dust into Bunny-Boy's two bright eyes, and took away the power of seeing the Fairies, after he should have cut his first wisdom-tooth. Then she gave a wicked chuckle, and Bunny-Boy began to cry and sob. But the Bad Fairy flew out of the window on her wings of storm-cloud, and no one in the room could hush the baby, till the shadow of the Bad Fairy was gone, and the shining sunbeams slid through the window again.

Of course it is a very long, long way to first-wisdom-tooth-cutting. A baby has to be quite twenty-one candles old to reach that time. In fact, it has to be really grown-up, and beyond counting the candles on a birthday cake to tell its time of life. So the Bad Fairy's gift did not concern Bunny-Boy much, because it was very far away, and he could not see it so plainly as the tiniest twinky star in the dimmest corner of the sky.

But the last Good Fairy's gift was very important. You know some of us *believe* in Fairies. Some of us even *hear* them, on windy nights outside, or when it is very quiet in the house. But who ever *sees* them, except in dreams? Do *you,* for instance?

Well, I may tell you that Bunny-Boy saw them all the time, and they made him very tricksy and whimsical from his earliest beginning,—long before he had reached a one-candle cake.

At first he used to lie in his pram, and twiggle his ten pink fingers at the prick-eared wavy leaves above him, and listen to the birds' gossip, and the wind's song in the branches. Next he would crawl along the floor to catch those golden butterflies called sunbeams. He would shut his fist very tight with a butterfly inside. He would open his fist very carefully, and peep in to look at the butterfly. But it had always flown. In the bath Bunny-Boy chased the soap bubbles on top of the water. He wanted to crack them open and look inside. He wanted the drip-drop diamonds from the tap for playthings. But, however tight he doubled up his fists, bubbles and drip-drops always escaped. For, you see, they are Fairy toys.

When Bunny-Boy was two candles old, cook made him a big pink and white cake, with a pink candle and a white candle. Nursie wove him a pink and white daisy-chain. And his four Aunties,—Aunt Polly, Aunt Dolly, Aunt Prue, and Aunt Sue,—each unknown to the other, gave him a cuddly brown Teddy Bear, four bears in all.

These are only a few of the surprises that came on two-candle day. But these are picked out to talk about, because they are in the story.

Bunny-Boy, you must know, lived in a white house in a big gum-tree forest, which was just full of Fairies. Beyond the gum-tree forest was a belt of ti-tree, where Brownies peeped and bunnies popped, quicker than shooting stars. The ti-tree fringed a silver shore, where little waves played chase up and down the sand. The great water stretched far and far away, where ships slide over the world's edge on strange adventures.

On two-candle day little boys and girls came to the white house to eat up the pink and white cake with the two candles. More, and more, and more little boys and girls came, till the garden was quite full of them, and Bunny-Boy was hoping the cake would go all round, and leave a few sugary crumbs for the four Teddies.

It was when they were playing hide-and-seek, and Bunny-Boy was in a hidey-hole behind the hedge near the gate, that he saw a little Fairy-Girl peeping wistfully through the green bars. A minute ago she had looked like a little white gum-tree with smoke-blue leaves. Now, as plain as plain, she was a Fairy with golden hair and sky-blue wings.

"Come and play!" said Bunny-Boy, opening the gate.

"They do not see me!" she said. "*You* see me, but not the others. Come and play on the shore."

Bunny-Boy left all the little boys and girls. But he carried his four Teddy Bears, two under each arm, and hurried after the Fairy. The little bears squeaked their fiercest squeaks, and grunted a great deal.

For it was a very tight squeeze.

At last they reached the shore and rolled on the sand, tired out.

"How can *I* be a Fairy?" Bunny-Boy asked the blue-winged Fairy, when he got back his breath.

"Yes! How can *we* be Fairies?" squeaked all four Baby-Bears.

"Of course toys *are* a kind of Fairy-Folk," said the Fairy, "though they are a very poor kind of Fairy! *You* are better than most Earth-Babies," she said to Bunny-Boy. "Still, you

are very far from being a Fairy. You might try first to turn into a Mer-baby, as silver-finned things are nearer to mortals than Fairies."

"And might we try to be Mer-bears?"

"Why, yes, of course! A person might *try* to be anything!"

"But how?"

"I think," said the Fairy, "an Earth-Baby ought to take off all his mortal wrappings. But you should leave on that ribbon of flowers. If you sit in the sea with that ribbon round you, the Mer-children might give you a fish-tail in exchange for the ribbon."

"Will they give *us* fish-tails?" asked all four bears in chorus. "For we can't take off our wrappings! Besides it is rather wet in the sea for sitting down."

"You must put up with getting wet, if you wish to be Mer-bears! What is the use of a tail, except to swim with? And how can you swim, unless you get wet?"

They sat in a row for a long, long time on the edge of the waves. The little crabs tickled the Teddies' toes, and the little waves tickled Bunny-Boy's. But the Mer-children hid shyly in the curve of the green breakers, under the snowy crests of foam, and would not be coaxed out.

"I am rather glad!" said Bunny-Boy to the Fairy. "For what would Nursie say, if I gave away my daisy-chain? Besides, I wonder if she would quite like me with a tail."

"Of course she would!" said the Fairy. "She would much rather polish one tail a morning, than scrub all your socks, and shine all your shoes.

"If I cannot have a tail, what about wings?" said Bunny-Boy. "Your two blue wings are very pretty."

"And very hard to grow!" said the Fairy.

"*We* all want rose-red wings!" cried the little Bears. "We want to fly up to the tree-tops, like the parrots, and sip honey, and peck fruit. How did *you* get your wings?"

"Fairies *grow* wings," she said. "If I lost my wings, I could never fly home to Fairyland!" She looked very sad to think of it.

"If *I* had wings," asked Bunny-Boy, "could *I* fly to Fairyland?"

"Perhaps,—if they were Fairy wings. But how *can* an Earth-Baby grow them? Birds and butterflies have lovely wings, that God made. And boats have not bad wings, that men make. But those fool-things, called aeroplanes, cannot fly far or strong, and have no feathers on their buzzing wings."

"If I cannot *grow* wings, I might *find* some!" said Bunny-Boy, with his black eyes all shiny.

So the Fairy and Bunny-Boy talked about it, till the round golden moon climbed over the ocean-rim, and turned the big water into moving gold.

The Baby-Bears had soon wearied of talk involving such hard problems. All four had gone tree-climbing in search of wings up there in the tree-tops, where, many and many a night, we hear many and many a Baby-Bear squeak with glee, riding pick-a-back on its Mammy's shoulders.

"I am tired!" yawned the little Fairy, with a graceful Fairy yawn. "We will sleep in these wild orchids under the ti-tree."

She lay down beside Bunny-Boy, and was soon fast asleep. But Bunny-Boy was wide awake, and his bold black eyes were full of wicked plans. He crawled softly up to the little Fairy, and pulled off both her sky-blue wings.

Up in Fairyland the Bad Fairy chuckled. She knew a Fairy would miss her wings more than an Earth-Baby its hands and feet.

Bunny-Boy ran fast, fast to a little hole in the ti-tree. He sat there in the dark, and tried to fasten the blue wings on to his shoulders. But they would not stick. So he left them there alone, neatly folded together in the dark hole, and crept back on tip-toe to where the Fairy was sleeping. No wings were on his shoulders,—only a daisy-chain.

The Fairy sat up, and rubbed her eyes. "I thought I felt a Bad Fairy about!" she said. "But, come! we must not think of sad things. I will play to you on my golden flute. The Brownies made it underground of pure, pounded wattle-blossom. When I play on it, it is hard to tell whether my songs are scents or sounds."

"Play to me about wings," said Bunny-Boy.

"And afterwards my wings must carry me home to Fairy-land," she said. So she put her golden flute to her lips, and this is what it sang:—

"Birdie, you could never lie
In that narrow shell of blue,
When God gave all the wide blue sky,
And wings, and songs, to you.

Blossom, you could never rest,
In a bud of velvet curled,
When you may dance, in rainbow vest,
Sweet-scented, o'er the world.

Baby, you could never sleep
In a cot with golden bars;
But you will wake from dreams, to sweep
Above the golden stars."

"The music is beautiful!" said Bunny-Boy. "But I did not notice much about *wings.*"

"Some day you will understand," said the Fairy, "if you keep the song in your heart all the way to Someday."

THE FIRST LESSON

Ida Rentoul Outhwaite

"Well, I have a very good song in my *head,*" said Bunny-Boy, "which I will sing to you soon. But let us dance first, for that music makes me feel very tippy-toe in the legs."

The music had called the four Bears down from the trees, and they all joined hands with Bunny-Boy to dance ring-a-rosy, while the Fairy piped to them.

When they had danced till they could see how the round world spins, they all flung down on the moss, and the Fairy asked Bunny-Boy to favour them with his song.

"It is more a story," he said, "one of my adventures, which I will tell you."

"Begin right away!" cried the four Bears. "We hate preambles, preludes, forewords, and apologies!"

So this is Bunny-Boy's story:—

THE LITLE LAND.

In the gully playing,
  All alone, all alone,
I saw a sunbeam straying
  Beneath a mossy stone.
So softly in I put my hand,
And found a very little land.

Toadstools were the houses,
  Misty-rose, smoky-blue;
All the trees were mosses,
  The pools were drops of dew;
And all the beds were cobwebs thin
To cradle sleeping Fairies in.

Moths and bees were birdies,
  Silver-gray, velvet-brown;
Cricket hurdy-gurdies
  Made music in the town.

And all the tiny folks came out,
And in the sunbeam moved about.

They could not see me peeping,
With their Fairy eyes.
They thought a cloud was creeping
Across their cool green skies;
And soon their little sunbeam sun
Came out again, and day was done.

I heard small insects tinkle
Like homing cows at seven;
I saw a daisy twinkle
For moonlight in their Heaven.
And, when I came away at last,
I felt so very big and vast.

I will go back to-morrow
With soldiers in my hand,
For, oh, it would be sorrow
To lose my little land.
But brave tin soldiers blue and red
Will guard it, while I sleep in bed.

"Oh, it would be sorrow to lose Fairyland!" cried the Fairy, disregarding the brave tin soldiers. She shook her two shoulders to air the crumples in her blue wings. But the wings were gone.

She threw herself face down on the moss, and cried as if her heart would break. And to see a Fairy cry is indeed a sad sight.

The Baby-Bears all squeaked in sympathetic chorus. But Bunny-Boy slunk away guilty and miserable. And he felt something like this:—

When the darkness gathers in,
We remember every sin,
All the little things we did,
Which the golden daylight hid.

But, when God sends back the sun,
We forget them every one,
Doing bad things through the light,
Which we think of in the night.

He crept to the hole in the ti-tree. He meant to give back the blue wings; but, when he patted them, and saw how pretty they were,—like little cut-out petals of the sky,—he just *couldn't.*

So he tried to comfort the Fairy another way.

"Don't cry! You will stay with me always, and never fly away."

But she cried harder, and harder, and harder. For what is one Earth-Baby compared with all Fairyland? Bunny-Boy thought she was turning into a little, dying, white gum-tree instead of a Fairy Without Wings.

"It will never do to make her all deaded," he said, beginning to cry too. He did not think about himself at all,—only of the sick Fairy. He ran and fetched the blue wings, and tied them on with his own daisy-chain to make up for being so cruel before. And the Fairy Without Wings was so glad to have her wings again, that she flew off with never a thank-you or goodbye, and left Bunny-Boy crying in the ti-tree. He cried all alone in the dark, and she did not look back once.

. . . . . .

Next morning Bunny-Boy sat up in his cot (where, of course, it would be easy for the Fairies to waft him from the ti-tree scrub).

The four Teddy-Bears sat, two on each side of the cot, waiting for Master to wake up and play. Nursie stood at the foot, smiling and brisk.

"What was it that happened in the night?" asked Bunny-Boy, trying to remember.

"Baby Sister came in the night," said Nursie.

"No!" said Bunny-Boy. "It was a Fairy Without Wings."

"You are a queer child!" said Nursie.

. . . . . .

Later on Bunny-Boy saw Baby Sister. He knew at once, by her smile and her blue eyes, that the Fairy had come back to stay for always, because he had given back her wings and let her fly away.

He peeped at her shoulders, and there were no sky-blue feathers, not even fairy-size. There were just two dimples where the wings used to sprout.

. . . . . .

All the Good Fairies came to the christening, and the one Bad Fairy was there too. The last of the Good Fairies hid the magic golden flute in Baby Sister's little throat. But the Bad Fairy put a longing for wings in her heart, though Baby Sister could never, never fly away to Fairyland, except in dreams. For now she was an Earth-Baby.

When Someday comes, we shall all have beautiful wings, and then we shall live happy ever after. So Bunny-Boy's story has a good ending, as all proper Fairytales must.

Annie R. Rentoul.

Melbourne.

The Drum.

By the REV. JAS. HEBBLETHWAITE.

THE Lord looked down from Heaven upon the earth
And saw red War in throes of evil birth,
Springing to burn and sully His fair world
With sword imbrued and bloody flag unfurled;
And through the air there rolled His sudden drum,
Heart-beats of men, sounding the high call—"Come."

And Serbia replied:
"Give me, though small, a place upon Thy side;
I cannot traitor be
Unto the principle of liberty
That Thou hast planted in the human breast;
And in Thy cause I will not spare my best:
I hear the muttering of Thy dreadful drum.
I come."

And Russia answered with a myriad shout:
"We thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast called us out
To fight upon Thy quarrel, for Thou art
The guidance and the worship of our heart;
And we through Thee love with a humble mirth
The dewy perfume of our holy earth,
The rapture of blue distance and faint smoke,
The joys and tears so poor of lowly folk—
The Russias answer to Thy yearning drum,
We come."

And France so debonair and delicate
Heard in the echoing roll the call of fate,
And pale and stern as sweet Antigone
Left all her cherished labours to be free—
Colour and graving tool, or pen, or plough;
Resolved no more to tyranny to bow;
And so she spake unto the urging drum,
"I come."

A while and Belgium said: "Take Thou my heart,
For Thou alone, O Lord, art now my part,
My only portion: children, wife and home,
Land, ancientry, bereft of all I roam;
I hear the whisper of Thy muted drum.
I come."

And Britain rose majestic from her flood:
"Much have I here to make life sweet and good,
Orchard and meadow deep in sunshine gleam,
Or dim with veiling blossom, faint with dream,
A gracious past of pure immortal song,
Glory and love my peaceful haunts among;
But not for these will I stand out of this,
Or rather for these I will win great bliss
And fame for high heroic duty done,
Mine still when I have passed, to legend gone:
So, Lord, in this fierce surge take me and mine,
Isles, continents, dominions, all are Thine.
We hear the thunder of Thy mighty drum,
We come."

James Hebblethwaite.

Woodbridge, Tas.

Ears and Years.

By EDMUND FISHER.

WE grieved of yore for Charley's ears,
My little wife and I;
Our sorrow found no vent in tears,
But sadly did we sigh
To see them sticking out afar
Instead of keeping coy:
So very foolish parents are
About their only boy.

In linen they were neatly bound
When Charley went to bed—
His mother put a bandage round
The urchin's sleepy head;
But O! those features seemed to scorn
The pressure she applied
When, carefully at early morn,
The bandage was untied.

Our ears were neat enough, indeed,
And not obtrusive thus—
He did not take, we both agreed,
Those ugly things from us.
Young Charley went his happy way
And nothing did he care
How far across the landscape they
Protruded through his hair.

The light of joy was on his face,
Big merry eyes he had:
No stain of action mean or base
Had come upon the lad.
He laughed and sang without a pause,
Unless it was to shout,
And yet we felt aggrieved because
His ears were sticking out.

Heigho! for those dear olden days;
There's much of truth, I find,
In what some watchful cynic says
Concerning humankind.
His maxim may provoke a sneer,
Perchance a guilty start!
But oft "The flat outstanding ear
Denotes an honest heart."

We look at offspring Charley now,
And sadly think of then;
Deep lines of craft are on his brow,
He outwits better men;
Maybe we wish the cute and quick
Had gone to join the dead
Before his ears began to stick
More closely to his head.

Time pressed them closer: by degrees
They lost their youthful range;
He went to earn his bread and cheese
Upon the Stock Exchange,

THE EXPLORERS
(STURT AND HIS COMRADES, 1829)

Percy Leason.

Where, like the cunning racing-horse
That neither kicks nor rears,
A broker runs his evil course
Whilst laying back his ears.

But to our castle-home in Spain
We sometimes fly away,
And Charles is there a boy again
With ears in bold display.
His mother never wants them tied
Nor calls them ugly things;
She views with fond maternal pride
Her little cherub's wings.

Edmund Fisher

Melbourne.

Song.

By FURNLEY MAURICE.

Fairies radiant and rare
Brought to me in dreams
Coral from the sundering seas,
Roses from the plundering bees,
Yet their bounty was not fair
As your bounty seems.
Fairies came—but that was so
Long ago—long ago!

Fairy hands have touched my face,
Fairy lips my lips,
When my careless fancies followed
Wakes of wingëd ships,
Where dream-winds about the brace
Holloed, hailed, and holloed.

Fairies came, but that was so
Long ago—long ago!
Yet the wile of faery lingers,
Age-old Magians speak
If my hand may touch your fingers
And my lips your cheek.

Furnley Maurice

Melbourne.

The Kaiser's Battle Hymn.

By WALTER MURDOCH.

LORD God of Battles, girt with steel
And ringed with flame, avenger, slayer,
To thee, and thee alone, I kneel:
Red God of Carnage, hear my prayer!

Not mine the thorn-crown'd God of Love
By slaves and weaklings held divine;
Whose symbols are the lamb, the dove,
(The eagle and the wolf are thine;)—

Nor yet the God who takes his stand
On Justice, though an Empire fall,—
Who metes, with cold, impartial hand,
An equal measure unto all;—

From all such shadowy deities
I turn to thee, great God of Might;
My sword obeys thy high decrees,
My shrapnel bursts for thy delight;

My thunder-throated guns declare
Thine excellence, dread Lord of Death:
The city wall, how strong soe'er,
Is shattered by their fiery breath.

Behold what goodly sacrifice
On thy dark altar I have laid;
May it find favour in thine eyes
When here I call to thee for aid!

Rally anew my broken ranks,
Re-form my spent and wavering line;
So shall thy servant give thee thanks
And ever praise thy name divine.

To pleasure thee my blade was bared,
For thee my eagle flag unfurled;
To serve thy will my hands have dared
To ruin realms, and clutch the world.

Perth. Walter Murdoch

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